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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 September 1996

Mardi 24 septembre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 September 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 septembre 1996

*The House met at 1334.
Prayers.*

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): I beg to inform the House of the unavoidable absence of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Please join me in welcoming the sixth group of pages to serve the 36th Parliament of Ontario. I want to introduce them to you one at a time, and maybe we would show our affection for them at the end. They may just step forward to be recognized:

Candace Bullock, Kenora; James Cameron, Etobicoke-Humber; Kevin Cooke, Lake Nipigon; Jonathan Coutts-Zawadzki, St Andrew-St Patrick; Sarah Dawson, Willowdale; Megan Findlay, Grey-Owen Sound; Natasha Kanerva, Durham-York; Stephen Kingerski, Sudbury; Sarah Kolasky, Parkdale; Alex Lambruschini, Scarborough East; Michael Mali, Bruce; Melissa Morgan, Lincoln; Geoffrey Nelson, Mississauga South; Trevor Nelson, St Catharines-Brock; Lyle Reid, Hastings-Peterborough; Tracy Reynolds, York East; Andrea Robinson, Wilson Heights; Nancy Rumble, Hamilton East; Caitlin Salter MacDonald, Ottawa East; Jeremy Schembri, Durham West; Laura Sisco, Guelph; Eddie Staines, York South; Richard Wiersma, Brant-Haldimand.

How do we show our welcome to the pages?

Applause.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: It may be a minor point, but it's a major point to the new page from Sudbury and his family. His name is pronounced Stephen Kingerski, and we welcome him warmly from Sudbury. Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Next week, the Health Services Restructuring Commission will return to Thunder Bay to render its final verdict on the future of health care services in our community in northwestern Ontario.

It is difficult to articulate in the short time I have today the level of concern and anxiety that has gripped our community since the initial report this past June. In fact, it would be accurate to say that over the course of the

summer Thunder Bay residents have been charged with a fury and an anger unmatched in recent memory.

The good news is that the community turned this anger and fear into action in an attempt to show the commission that it simply had got it wrong. Thousands of people responded to this call to arms by phone, fax, letters — which I have right here — petitions and at public rallies. I believe they have forced the commission to revisit its initial decision and made it recognize that the people of Thunder Bay will not idly sit by while their health care needs are denied.

The big question is whether the commission will now understand that Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario need more acute, chronic and long-term beds to serve all of northwestern Ontario or that psychiatric services and facilities must be enhanced and assured.

Finally, the Minister of Health must understand that he cannot remove himself from this final decision. His fingerprints are all over the restructuring process, whether it's in Thunder Bay, Sudbury or Toronto.

The people of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario have spoken loud and clear. On Friday, October 4, we'll find out if the commission and this government have been listening.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Mr Speaker, I rise today, through you to the House and through the House to the people of Ontario, to express my great dismay and disappointment that this government, in its haste to discredit the education system in Ontario and its haste to paint a picture that is totally untrue and false about an education system that has served all of us and our families well over the last few years, has not found the time to recognize the outstanding achievement of the Durham Board of Education, which has been recognized just recently by an international body for excellence in education.

As a matter of fact, it was announced that it had won an international award. The Carl Bertelsmann Foundation is a German organization that annually seeks to identify outstanding public education systems around the world. The Durham Board of Education was the only North American finalist. It won out over other finalists from Scotland, the Netherlands, Norway, Hungary, Switzerland and New Zealand, and all this government can do is cast aspersions. It has no time at all to recognize that there are some wonderful things happening in Ontario under the guise of education. I believe an apology is owed to all of those who work in the education system, and a voice of confidence in and congratulation to the Durham board for winning this wonderful award and putting Ontario on the map from an educational perspective.

1340

DONOVAN BAILEY

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): I rise today to recognize Donovan Bailey, double gold medallist and resident of Halton Centre in the town of Oakville.

This summer Donovan Bailey struck gold, not once but twice, first in the men's 100-metre sprint and then as a member of Canada's four-by-100-metre relay team. In the process, he broke the record for the 100-metre sprint and touched the hearts of millions across the country. This past weekend Donovan was welcomed home by thousands of friends and fellow citizens in an unprecedented display of pride in the accomplishments of this Oakville hero.

Donovan is a role model for all Canadians, but especially our youth. His accomplishments, his attitude and his drive to succeed speak to the potential within all of us to achieve our goals through hard work, commitment and perseverance. I've had the pleasure of meeting Donovan and I can testify he is a genuinely nice person. With Donovan what you see is what you get.

I ask all members present today to join me in congratulating Donovan Bailey not only for his accomplishments at the Olympic Games but for giving all of us something to be proud of. Our children can do no wrong if they adopt people like Donovan as their role models, and that should give all of us much hope for the future.

It is also important to note in the Legislature for the record that Donovan Bailey is undeniably, officially, absolutely, at 9.84 seconds, the fastest man on earth.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'd like to join my colleague from Sault Ste Marie and also recognize the Durham Board of Education for being named by the Bertelsmann Foundation as the district "that represents the best framework for the desired development of schools." This international prize was set up by the German media giant to promote innovation in the public sector.

The Durham board won out over nominees from six other countries on criteria which included concern for students, pedagogical innovation, testing, quality assurance and parental participation. Congratulations to all the people connected with the Durham board.

Secondly, I'd like to recognize another esteemed member of the education community, the Minister of Education. The minister deserves an A+ for achieving what he set out to do a year ago, which was of course to invent a crisis in the educational system in order to justify certain actions. The minister has successfully met all of the elements necessary to create a crisis.

He has sent out a series of negative messages; he has created confusion, mistrust and cynicism among educational stakeholders in the system who now fully believe that he will circumvent the processes that he created in order to implement slashing the educational budget to fund the 30% tax cut; he has created a crisis of confidence in public education and, finally and most seriously, he has created a scapegoat, the classroom teachers.

Their alienation could not have come at a more inopportune time, the commencement of a new school year. How the minister could be so insensitive and create such discouragement among those who play the most crucial role in education is beyond —

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): The Health Services Restructuring Commission has studied the Sudbury health care system and is now ready to bring down their recommendations. In fact they were ready to make their recommendations today but have now delayed publishing them by one week.

What is the reason for this artificial delay? The people of Sudbury are anxious to know the fate of their health care system. I'll tell you why there's a delay; it's for no other reason than pure political manoeuvring. The Premier is visiting Sudbury this Friday and the spin doctors in his office do not want any negative publicity or any controversy surrounding the Premier's visit; therefore, the report is being delayed until after the Premier visits Sudbury.

We are sceptical about the entire Tory health care agenda, and hospital restructuring is no exception. The Tories have broken a major election promise that they would not cut health care. In fact they've cut \$1.3 billion from hospital budgets alone.

Next Monday the commission will be revealing their binding decisions in Sudbury, but guess what? The hospital administrators and the media will be told of their decision before the MPPs and regional council. We have a bigger stake in the outcome of the decision than the Tory spin doctors and we have a right to be there when the announcement is made, not afterwards.

The commission could very well bring down recommendations that are good for the Sudbury health care system, but they are getting off on the wrong foot by treating the local elected representatives unfairly.

ALZHEIMER COFFEE BREAK

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): Every day millions of people across the country break for coffee. On September 20, 1996, Canadians made their caffeine count by hosting and participating in the Alzheimer Coffee Break in their communities.

I was pleased to be part of the Huron coffee break last Friday. Donations from every cup of coffee poured benefited the Alzheimer Movement of Canada. This organization is committed to research and providing information and support to caregivers.

There are 250,000 Canadians with Alzheimer's, and that number is expected to grow to 750,000 by the year 2030. It is estimated that the cost is approximately \$4 billion each year to care for Alzheimer patients.

On September 6 I chaired an historic meeting with the Alzheimer Association of Ontario. It is the government's intent to develop a strategy to deal with patients with Alzheimer's and dementia and their families. Approximately 50 people participated, including patients, care-

givers, health professionals and researchers. I am looking forward to the report from the Alzheimer association.

I would like to thank all the volunteers and caregivers who give their support daily to the people with Alzheimer's.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): On Monday, August 26 this year a horrible tragedy occurred on Song Meadoway in the riding of Oriole. My constituent Kim Wong was in the basement of her town house when a runaway gravel truck struck her house, killing her and injuring her two sons. The Wong family and their neighbours in the Meadoway community have been traumatized by this event, and I know that we all give our condolences to the Wong family. Many families, however, especially children, are afraid to go into their basements.

My constituents have asked me to bring this issue before the Legislature and the Minister of Transportation. As MTO is aware, the company that operated the vehicle in question has had more than 500 citations since 1991. My constituents believe, as I do, that if the ministry had better enforced their regulations, this tragedy might have been prevented.

At the very first opportunity I will introduce a petition from hundreds of constituents in the riding of Oriole. We are urging this government and the Ministry of Transportation to view the issue of truck safety inspection more seriously, both through legislation and, more importantly, strict enforcement. The Meadoway community will participate with the Ministry of Transportation when safety issues that affect our community are decided.

I would like to acknowledge the response from the Family Service Association of Metropolitan Toronto, with assistance from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, for excellent community trauma counselling. Furthermore, MTO responded quickly to the request for timely repairs to the structural damage caused by this accident.

Once again, I know that all members of this House will express their condolences, along with me, to the Wong family for this tragic accident.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Along with all members of the assembly, I express congratulations to the Durham Board of Education, which won the prestigious Carl Bertelsmann Foundation award for excellence over nominees throughout the world.

Applause.

Mr Wildman: The response of all members is welcome, because it belies this government's insistent claims that Ontario's public education system is broken. There are 61,000 students and 6,000 staff in the Durham board and they deserve to be recognized for this very high achievement. Instead, the Minister of Education repeatedly denigrates public education in Ontario in an attempt to justify enormous funding cuts that hurt classroom education for all Ontario students.

The Carl Bertelsmann Foundation annually seeks to recognize outstanding public education systems around

the world. The Durham board was the only North American finalist and won out over finalists from Scotland, the Netherlands, Norway, Hungary, Switzerland and New Zealand.

The board and its staff deserve credit for this achievement in the face of Conservative cuts and a Minister of Education who continually badmouths the education system.

What's broken with the education system? It's time to stop manufacturing a crisis and acknowledge the successes that our education system has met. It's time to end the war of words with Ontario teachers and with boards of education. Public education in Ontario, properly funded, will produce more champions like the Durham Board of Education.

1350

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): I am pleased to announce that on Saturday evening, September 21, 1996, the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake once again bloomed its way into the ranks of Canada's most beautiful towns with populations between 5,000 and 20,000 people. On behalf of the province, I'd like to say congratulations to Lord Mayor Michael Dietsch and all of the town's citizens, not only for winning, but for pulling together as a team. That is what the Communities in Bloom trophy is really all about: combining environmental awareness, landscape originality, heritage preservation and community involvement. I am told that the town now hopes to get ready for the Communities in Bloom international competition. On behalf of the province, I wish them well.

LEGISLATIVE INTERNS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I'd like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the 1996-97 Ontario legislative interns: Christine Czapnik, Andrew Hastings, Anthony Jonker, Rina Li, David MacDuff, Christopher McDermott, Annamie Paul and Charles Vincent. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

JOHN WHITE

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I wonder if I might ask the unanimous consent of the House for a few moments to pay tribute to the late John White, former member for London South.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it the wish of the House? Agreed.

Mr Bob Wood: I rise to pay tribute to the Honourable John Howard White, who passed away on September 5, 1996. He was the member for London South from 1959 to 1975 and the longest-serving MPP for this riding. He served in many capacities: committee chairman, chief government whip and a minister in both the Robarts and Davis governments. He was a major political force in both administrations and was considered a potential successor to Premier Robarts, although when the time came he decided not to run for that position.

In London he was known as an innovator, a promoter of new ideas, a hard worker for his community and, perhaps most important, a champion of the underdog. Our province is the better for John White having been one of us. I know that the hearts of all members of this Legislature reach out to Bea and to his family.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I too have the honour to have the opportunity to rise today to honour John White, the colourful, dedicated and versatile former member for London South. He is remembered and revered in London, the place he made home and the constituency he served with great distinction in this Legislature for 16 years.

First elected in 1959, John White has the distinction of having held more cabinet posts than any other representative from southwestern Ontario, and maybe even in the province, before his retirement in 1975. He served as government whip, Minister of Revenue, Minister of Colleges and Universities, Minister of Industry and Tourism, Treasurer, Minister of Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs and the chair of cabinet for many years.

John White had character, style, humour and dedication. I met him on only one occasion, during the year 1971-72, when he was Minister of Colleges and Universities and I was the personal assistant to the then president of York University, David Slater. Many of you will remember that year as the first major economic crisis which faced our growing university sector. John White was responsible for carrying out the government's limiting of university grants, a policy which was universally decried by administrators, faculty staff and students alike.

His skill, his willingness to listen to critics, to answer their questions and yet to remain firm in his resolve to fulfil his responsibilities to his government and his ministry have remained with me to this day and would, I suggest, provide a role model for many of us here in this place.

John White tackled everything with verve and vigour, with thoughtfulness and skill. His wife, the former Beatrice Ivey, told the Free Press after his death that "He liked to expedite things, to make things happen, but it was never for himself. It was important for him to serve the people."

From John White's service with the Royal Canadian Navy during the war years, his work as a representative in this place, his many positions in cabinet or his later contribution as the president of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, he was, in the very best sense, a public servant. He believed in the ability and the necessity of government to do good things on behalf of the citizens of this province. He is remembered as a faithful constituency representative, being in his riding every week and meeting the needs not only of his own constituents but those of his dear friend and Premier, John Robarts, when the Premier was not able to travel to London as often as he wished.

John White was also a businessperson, having educated himself with a bachelor of arts, a business diploma and a master of arts in economics from the University of Western Ontario. He worked for the Steel Company of

Canada, for Canadian Industrial Supply Co Ltd, and in his later years chaired the board of trustees of First Canadian Funds and AngloGibraltar Insurance Group. He was a founder of the Canadian Development Corp.

John White saw no contradiction between his reverence for public service and his involvement in business and industry. He admitted, however, in his characteristic way that he missed the Legislature, confessing he missed "the hoopla, the camaraderie, the arm-twisting and the deal-making."

I extend the most sincere condolences of my leader, the New Democratic Party and this place to Mrs White and her daughters, Martha and Emily. Your family no doubt made many sacrifices so that John White could represent his fellow citizens of London so well and so faithfully as an MPP and as a long-serving cabinet minister. Be assured that his contribution is not forgotten and is gratefully acknowledged here today.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend our condolences to the wife and family of John White, who was a man who served, as has been mentioned, with distinction the people of London South. The fact that he had a number of cabinet posts, a wide variety of cabinet posts, is a clear indication of his understanding of the responsibility and role that government plays and the faith, of course, that Premier Robarts and Premier Davis had in his abilities. He was an individual in politics who was not afraid to stir controversy, who was not afraid to put his views on the line, was not afraid to ruffle feathers even within his own caucus and his own government, and that speaks well for him.

We wonder, I suppose, how people will be viewed once they pass on. He was viewed as a character, and a positive character, in an obituary that was found in the Toronto Star very recently. It has been mentioned that he was a member for 16 years, which is certainly a matter of distinction in itself, a clear indication of the support of the people of London South for him and of the general support that he enjoyed in the London area. It also mentioned he was politically skilful and "regarded by the opposition at Queen's Park" — and I say this in a very nice sense, because each party must have people in this role — "as the government's chief hatchet man," the columnists wrote. That really means he was the person in the government who would carry the tough battles in the Legislative Assembly. On the day that happens, members of the other party believe that is something to disagree with. But placing it in perspective, one always admires those who are prepared to carry the tough arguments for the government and to be tough when it's necessary in the House.

1400

Something members would find amusing and something which perhaps has been an age-old circumstance, it says, "With a fast tongue, a raucous voice and a ready wit, he was appointed party whip" — the party whip of the government will find this amusing, as will all — "to keep the party's backbenchers in line when they became lazy and listless following fat majority wins in the 1960s." For any chief government whip, that is always a role: how to motivate members of one's own very large

caucus. I'm sure that many who have had that position could learn from John White.

So a person passes on, at the age of only 71, who has served in business with distinction, in politics, and subsequent to politics in the very important area of president of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, once again remembering the history of this province and wanting to preserve what is best.

When I look at many of the ideas he brought forward, in today's context he would be considered to be very much a red Tory. In those days he was probably the moderate, middle-of-the-road person — the Premier smiles. He believed in land-banking and a 50% tax on speculative real estate profits and an imposition of a tax on energy consumption, so he would be considered in those days probably to be a moderate, a red Tory today.

In any age, no matter when we sit in this assembly, he is an individual to be admired, and we all express our appreciation for his service and our condolences to his family and his many friends and supporters.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I'm pleased to take this opportunity to update the House on our government's activities since the Legislature last met in June and also to look ahead to what we'll be doing as a government over the next few months.

There is no doubt that job creation has been and will remain the number one priority for our government. While our unemployment rate fell recently to 8.5%, the single biggest month-over-month drop since 1984, the human cost of this level of unemployment is still unacceptably high. That is why in our government's very first budget we cut income and payroll taxes and that is why both the ministers of finance and economic development have all been meeting with potential investors and job creators to spread the message that Ontario is open for business.

Earlier this month, I travelled to France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The Minister of Finance also was in Zurich. I'd like to tell the House that our message that Ontario is on track to being competitive on taxation, on regulation and on legislation was very well received by the business community and investors in those countries. Investors and job creators are very excited about the potential market that exists in Ontario for them.

We stressed that Ontario is a cornerstone of an integrated, interprovincial and international trade market within a day's drive of more than 120 million North American consumers. With an annual purchasing power of about \$3 trillion, the market access for the Toronto area is larger than —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order. Come to order.

Hon Mr Harris: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, with an annual personal purchasing

power of about \$3 trillion, the market access for the Toronto area is larger than the areas around Boston, Chicago, Detroit or New York. As part of this government's ongoing effort to bring jobs to Ontario, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism led sector-specific business delegations to Houston, Texas, and to San Jose, California. He also went to Mexico to reinforce and strengthen our NAFTA partnership.

There are signs that our plan is working. I'm pleased to say that during the first two months following our tax cut, 82,000 net new jobs were created in the province of Ontario.

Just last evening I attended the opening of a beautiful new marketing, sales and distribution centre for Mother Parker's tea and coffee in Mississauga.

During the last quarter of 1995, our GDP grew by 4.7% at annual rates. During the first six months of this year, our merchandise exports rose by 5.7%.

Auto production in the second quarter of 1996 reached an all-time record level, and in the same quarter housing starts rose by 14.2%.

Inflation in July was 1.2%, the eighth consecutive month it has remained below 2%.

Now, according to private sector forecasters — not government forecasters — Ontario is poised to grow by 3% annually during the next four years — more quickly, they say, than any of the G-7 industrialized nations. There is still, however, much work to be done.

Over the next few months we will continue to meet with job creators, both here and abroad, to make them aware, not only about our competitiveness as a jurisdiction, but also about the other efforts we are undertaking to make Ontario the jurisdiction of choice for jobs and investment, efforts such as making government more efficient and effective through our ministries' business planning process; making government more open and responsive to the public, with our referendum initiative; focusing our education system on quality in the classroom, with an emphasis on schools that teach and on kids that learn; ensuring that our health care system is —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm a patient man. I would ask for your indulgence and your order. And if you can't give it to me, then I will exercise my authority.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Harris: — ensuring that our health care system is protected by focusing our resources and meeting our \$17.4-billion commitment; protecting Ontarians through an emphasis on effective correctional institutions and a crackdown on serious crime; addressing environmental issues, including smog reduction; protecting our vulnerable through changes to a number of our support programs; and caring responsibly for Ontario's children.

As we begin this fall sitting, I invite all members of this Legislature to work with us to continue to help bring fiscal sanity to our public finances and to bring jobs to this great province. The hope, the opportunity, the prosperity that those jobs bring, both for today and for our children, will ensure a bright future for Ontario. Thank you.

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I am delighted to respond to the Premier's essay on, "What I did on my summer vacation."

We have a situation where the Premier has gone to Europe, has told potential investors of the merits of investing in Ontario, and I find it somewhat strange that he gives the impression that for the first time ever a government is open for business and it's there, encouraging people to invest in Ontario, particularly given the markets that he visited: the UK, Germany and France, which have traditionally, next to the United States, been the major investors in Ontario.

I think it's important that we understand and that we realize that when you talk about some of the economic indicators there are some serious deficiencies, and I'd like to give you an example. Notwithstanding that the automotive sector is showing some increase, the bulk of that production is going to the United States. When you take a look at the automotive sector in Ontario, other than add-on investment, which has been made to protect the investment that is already here, there has not been a new greenfield investment in the last six years. When you take a look at people who came to Ontario to look at whether they should invest — I'm talking about BMW, talking about Mercedes-Benz — they opted to go to the United States. So we have a situation where we are, there's no question about it, competitive in the automotive sector because of the investments that were made years and years ago, but obviously we are not competitive, other than add-on investments, today for greenfield investments.

1410

When you highlight some of the advantages for coming to Ontario — let's just suppose that an advance team came to Ontario today to decide whether or not they were going to invest. You have to understand that most people who invest in Ontario from abroad are doing it to use Ontario as a springboard to provide production to be shipped into the United States. We have a mature market here and the growth, if you take a look at the growth that's happening, is fairly stagnant.

But you highlight all of the advantages, and I can tell you, if an advance team came and was reading in the newspapers, it would see that the education system is on the verge of chaos, not because of what it has done, but because of what it's liable to become. We have a situation where in the health care system doctors are threatening to withdraw services; hospitals are threatening to close their doors. We have a situation where your government on this very day is probably going to be bringing in legislation to reduce environmental controls and to reduce the quality of life in Ontario. We have a situation where people are constantly complaining that they don't have access to highly skilled employees. We have a high unemployment rate but still a serious shortage of people able to provide employment services in the high-tech area. You talk about protecting the vulnerable and caring for Ontario's children when both those sectors are under increased pressure because of activities of your government.

So notwithstanding your grandiose statements about why people would invest here, I suggest to you that we

have a serious problem, and unless this government addresses it, we are going to continue to lose potential investors.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Just to follow up on my colleague's comments on the job front, Premier, you are letting the people of Ontario down on your job promise. You promised, when you ran in the campaign, that you would see 145,000 jobs a year created. That was in your Common Sense Revolution. You put out a budget barely six months later indicating that you were going to miss that mark dramatically.

Now we have the figures for the first eight months of 1996, and what do we find? Dramatically fewer jobs, 22,000 fewer jobs created in Ontario in 1996 than in the same period in 1995. Your government is performing far worse than we did a year ago, Premier. We find your own report indicating 7,000 more young people out of work in the first eight months of 1996. We find that employment in the manufacturing sector is barely up. You have misled the people of Ontario. You said there would be 145,000 jobs created during the campaign —

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr Phillips: I would withdraw that comment and say that the document that you produced during the campaign —

The Deputy Speaker: I thank you very much.

Mr Phillips: I would say that the document that you ran on misled the people of Ontario, promising 145,000 jobs when you're coming nowhere close to that.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): In response to the Premier, only a Conservative government that is visiting more and more dismal numbers on the people of Ontario would try to spin this kind of document. Only a mean-spirited Conservative government would try to take credit for an unemployment rate of 8.5%, when any economist worth his salt in this country knows that more and more people are dropping out of the workforce, more and more people are disappearing. The government itself has commissioned a study to find out what's happening to people who are being forced out of the social assistance system, because they know they're not getting jobs. They're disappearing out of the system; they're disappearing out of the workforce. Only a Conservative government would try to spin it that the real unemployment rate of 30% among people under 30 is somehow good news.

There is a tremendous contradiction here, and maybe the Premier can explain some of it. The Premier went to London — he's reporting here a bit on his trip — and talked about the Ontario education system. It's incredible what he had to say. He said that Ontario's education system is one of the best in the world. I happen to agree with that. I wish he'd talk to his Minister of Education, who says that our education system is falling apart. This is an incredible contrast.

The Premier says Canada's top 10 high-technology companies, in terms of revenue, are all Ontario-based and he says it's because of our education system. He says that the University of Waterloo, McMaster University and the University of Toronto, for example, rank among North America's top computer, electrical and mechanical

engineering schools. He says that the University of Waterloo is a favourite recruitment place for high-tech companies. He says that the 1996 World Competitiveness Report ranks "Canada's education system ahead of the US in terms of ability to meet the needs of a competitive economy." Why doesn't he talk to his Minister of Education who says that our education system is falling apart?

The Premier, before he tries this spin, should go talk to a few of the economists who even endorsed his campaign a year ago, because they say that whatever jobs we're enjoying right now are totally unrelated to his government's policies. Whatever job growth we're enjoying we are enjoying because the United States is into a presidential election. In presidential elections the interest rates drop in the United States. They put the gas pedal to the floor and they create jobs. The only sectors where we are creating any jobs are in those that are exporting right into that US economy. It's got nothing to do with your economic program — nothing.

I note that the Premier says the government is going to do good things for children. I happened to be watching the CBC's National last night. Your government has set a record because your government has moved more children out of apartment buildings, out of dwellings and into hotel rooms than any government ever in the history of Canada. You have situations where five children are living in one room in a hotel — five children in one room. The United Nations condemns that, and you stand up here and try to take credit. Go hire yourself some more spin doctors, because this will never pass.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): This is a government that's on the hook, that has said 725,000 jobs, which it cannot and will not deliver. This is a government which, upon returning from Europe, borrowed \$6 billion when the need for this fiscal year is only \$3 billion. This is a government that has no economic plan beyond two years, that is literally flying by the seat of its pants. This is a Premier who, while addressing the press, states that we're on our way to \$8.11 billion, referring to the budget deficit, yet last week tells us that he's \$5.11 billion short. They have no credibility. They have no plans. They've been very lucky and that's all.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I find it passing strange indeed that the Durham Board of Education has been awarded an award of international excellence and no one in the government has a thing to say about it. No one in the government, not even the members who represent Durham, have anything to say about it here today in the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

1420

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the minister responsible for closing hospitals. If there is one thing that has characterized your term in office, it has been an unprecedented grab for power that would give you, and you alone, the ability to

close our hospitals in a desperate bid to find the \$1.3 billion that you have already taken out of the hospital budgets.

You have tried to wash your hands of this messy business of shutting down our hospitals by setting up your so-called independent hospital restructuring commission. You somehow wanted the public to believe that you had nothing to do with the hospital closures that were coming. Those cowardly tactics are completely unacceptable and they are now only too transparent.

We have seen this summer that you are calling the shots without any question on hospital closures. You presented a secret report to your supposedly arm's-length hospital restructuring commission and in that secret report you instructed the commission to close an additional four Metro Toronto hospitals on top of the 11 hospitals already recommended for closure or amalgamation. You wanted to go even beyond the district health council in shutting down hospital beds and access to health care for people in this province.

Minister, will you admit once and for all to the people of Ontario that you are at the helm of this destructive project? Will you take the responsibility and admit that you are the one who's driving the bulldozer through Ontario's health care system? You're making the decisions that are going to shut down hospitals in this province.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member is well aware that a commission has been set up and that it is, with respect to its decision-making processes and the decisions it will make, at arm's length from the government. I thought we had agreement from all three parties. I've read the quotes many times from both the Liberal Party and the NDP about the need for hospital restructuring.

I remind the honourable member that we're the last province to go through restructuring, that hospitals have amalgamated in every other province except Ontario. In Winnipeg, when 500 beds were closed and services were amalgamated into hospitals in 1992 and 1993, we actually saw an increase in the number of patients who were able to be served by that system after restructuring. We saw more dollars into front-line services, better services, more surgeries, greater access. That's the goal of hospital restructuring. That is the goal the commission has in mind.

You know the people on that commission because they've served for your government and they've served for the NDP government, and they are of the highest calibre. I have complete confidence that they will make the right decisions for a better and more accountable health care system in this province.

Mrs McLeod: We're talking about "processes of restructuring," the words the minister likes to use. We're talking about a Minister of Health trying to shift responsibility for the provision of health care to the people of this province, about a Minister of Health making secret reports to his own commission and trying to deny the very existence of those reports in a way that is less than honest with the people of this province.

My question relates to the fact that this minister made a secret report to his commission, and when it came to

light, his office first attempted to deny the very existence of the report. Then they said if it did exist, there was nothing significant in it.

We know that it existed, that it was significant, that it took two months of intensive review and several full-day staff retreats to complete your secret report and that it states very clearly where you, the Minister of Health, stand on the health council's recommendations for Metro hospitals: that you recommend even more closures, more losses of hospital beds, more denial of access to health care.

Minister, I ask you how you can continue to claim that your handpicked commission, the commission you set up, the commission that you staff with your own staff members, is an independent commission, when you make secret reports to direct it.

Hon Mr Wilson: I think the confusion arises here that a reporter had done a story about a report. It was not, as it turned out, the report that went to the commission. The report that went to the commission, the data provided to the commission, is in the public domain, so there is no secret report. I remind you in the case of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council study which was made public last November by the district health council that even at that time the data were two to three years old. It was actually two and a half years old. By the time the commission gets to looking at Metro, which I understand it's looking at now, the data are at least three years old. The ministry has been providing, as it does in the case of all of these studies, updated data at the request of the commission.

So there's no secret report and the data are available. In fact, much of it comes from the district health councils themselves. They either give it directly or the ministry bureaucrats provide it.

Mrs McLeod: You are the Minister of Health. You are responsible for managing access to health care that is critically needed by the people of this province, and I say to you that you are being less than honest in your plans for delivering health care to people in this province. Come to my community of Thunder Bay, which is on the verge of a health care crisis because of the recommendations of your commission, my community, where you did make a secret submission to the commission, where you said you were going to make it public but you haven't chosen to make it public because of some sort of legal problem you have discovered. Come to my community, where it was absolutely bizarre to hear you, a Minister of Health, say that you expected the commission to treat you and your report just as it would the report of any private citizen.

Minister, do you understand that you are not a private citizen? You are the Minister of Health. You are responsible for making these decisions. You are responsible for the financial bottom line. You're responsible for taking the \$1.3 billion away from hospitals that's driving the loss of hospital beds, and you will be ultimately responsible for longer waiting lists for surgery and for the closure of emergency rooms and for people being denied the care they need. The veil of secrecy is completely unacceptable. Will you stop your secret dealings and deal openly with the people of Ontario on this critical issue?

Hon Mr Wilson: On this particular issue, both the Premier and I have been extremely clear. We know that in three and a half, four years' time, when we go back to the doors of the people of Ontario, they will hold us accountable for what has occurred during the time that we have been in office, but unlike the naysayer across the floor here, I have complete confidence in Duncan Sinclair and the members of the commission that they will make the best decisions without political interference, and if you're suggesting political interference here, I can tell you, you are dead wrong. Those ladies and gentlemen who make up the commission are getting paid \$1 a year. They are spending most of their time — and they are very busy people in their private lives — trying to do what's right for health care in this province, and they don't need jabs from you. They need your support to restructure a system which, all three parties have agreed in this House, and it's on record on Hansard, is at least 10 to 15 years overdue with respect to restructuring.

We are propping up buildings that are half-empty right now. We owe it to the taxpayers to amalgamate those hospitals, get those administrative costs down, get rid of the waste and duplication and the gaps in service and drive those dollars to front-line services so we can perform more surgeries and look after more people as they need the health care system. That is the goal of restructuring, that is the goal of the commission, and it doesn't need political pandering on your side.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): New question, the member for Fort William.

Mrs McLeod: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: This minister must have a new dictionary that defines "political interference" if he doesn't think a secret report from a minister to a supposedly independent commission is political interference —

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry, I didn't hear who your question is to.

Mrs McLeod: I haven't placed it, Mr Speaker. I will proceed to do so.

EDUCATION FINANCING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question is for the minister responsible for cutting classroom funding. Minister, three weeks ago, the students of this province returned to school and they faced the damaging effects of the \$400 million which you have already cut from education budgets. Fewer teachers, larger classes, less resources, more portables — that's what students are finding education is all about in Mike Harris's Ontario.

Minister, given that your \$400 million in cuts are clearly being felt in the classrooms this fall, how can you even consider slashing another \$600 million to \$900 million from the schools of this province?

1430

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let me see if I can make this very clear to the leader. I am not, and my colleagues are not, willing to ask the students of Ontario to pay for their own education by adding to the debt of the province. We

believe that there's a responsibility to create an environment that those young people, when they've finished their schooling, will have the opportunity to enjoy a prosperous Ontario and a good job market. So we are doing the responsible thing.

I have been disappointed by some of the responses to our request to school boards to reduce their expenditures by 1.8% last year. I know most of the people in Ontario have seen reductions of a much larger magnitude in their workplaces and in their homes, and any of the plans by any of the individuals in our school system that will affect children in our classroom are unnecessary and unfortunate and this government will not tolerate them.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, I'm positively afraid to even attempt to imagine what our education system would look like if you took over the full control that you seem to want.

But I do wonder whether or not you have actually visited a classroom this fall, whether you've talked to teachers, whether you have any idea what the effect of your cuts have already been, whether you have any idea how large the classes are. I wonder if you have any idea that students in our high schools are in classes of 40, that we have classes of that size even in chemistry classes, where students are working with dangerous equipment. I wonder if you've been into the junior kindergarten classes where there are 28 students, which is well beyond what is safe for the management of four-year-olds. I wonder if you've talked to the parents of special education students in board after board where special education's been cut and their children are not going to get the kind of support they need.

There is no question that your cuts have hurt children in the classroom and that children are going to be left behind. If John or Jane can't keep up in the classroom, there is not going to be the special support from the teachers that would be necessary for them to move ahead.

Minister, I have to wonder why you are so hell-bent on cutting hundreds of millions of dollars from education just to pay for your tax cut, just to hit your arbitrary goal of taking \$1.2 billion out of the education system, that you don't even seem to care what happens to kids along the way. Minister, is hurting kids really a necessary part of creating the crisis you seem to want to destroy public education?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I'm disappointed in the tone of the Leader of the Opposition today, but I'm very, very pleased to have the opportunity to respond. First of all, I have had an opportunity to be in the classroom this fall. I think the Leader of the Opposition knows that I spent a good deal of my time last year in classrooms across the province. I intend to continue that because what's happening in the classrooms is very important to me, and it's important to me personally to see what is happening in our education system.

The Leader of the Opposition brings up an interesting point. She brings up the point of large class sizes. A lot of parents in this province wonder, when we have the lowest student-teacher ratio in Canada at about 15 to 1, when we have that low a student-teacher ratio, why it is that class sizes in some circumstances are so large. The question the parents of Ontario are asking me, and the

question that I intend to answer to them, is: Where are the teachers?

Mrs McLeod: The minister may be disappointed, but I'm a lot more than disappointed. I am worried, I am heartsick, I am angry at what is happening to students in classrooms across this province. I am angry and I am heartsick that we have a Minister of Education who does not understand what Ontario education is about and what we have achieved in Ontario education. He doesn't even understand what it is his cuts are doing to education and to students.

I don't think the minister understands what's at stake here. I don't think he understands that this isn't some kind of balance sheet of a local business as he attempts to run the entire education system like the so-called business that he wants it to be. I don't think he understands that this is about kids' needs and about providing the support that kids need to learn, and it's about the future of our children, and it is worth investing in. It is not something that you try and take \$1.2 billion out of, just for the sake of hitting his personal financial target.

Minister, I believe that students and parents in this province feel betrayed. They trusted your Premier, Mike Harris, when he promised that our children and their education would not be hurt by his revolution and they want to know what happened to his promise not to cut classroom education. Minister, as you talk glibly about slashing another \$600 million out of our schools, can you tell the people of Ontario what happened to the Mike Harris promise not to cut classroom education?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I think it's obvious to the people of Ontario that this government intends to keep its promises to the people of Ontario, every one of them. I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that she need not worry, because the record of this government over the last year is very clear. This government over the last year has made more quality improvements in our school system than any previous government in one year.

May I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that we have put forward the EQAO, the Education Quality and Accountability Office, an independent agency that will test the quality of education in the province for the first time. We now have a College of Teachers, a college that will represent the professional interests of teachers and the public interest. We have initiated the most important secondary school reforms in my time in this province, looking for the real needs of our students in the future. We have doubled our commitment to technology partnership programs in the province — all quality initiatives, all designed to improve education in the province of Ontario.

But let me assure the Leader of the Opposition and the parents in Ontario that there are two things that this government is not willing to have happen: We are not willing to have our children educated in 1950s-style classrooms and we are not —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Minister of Education.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Unlike the previous two governments, we are unwilling to send our children a bill for their own education.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. The Premier will know that earlier this summer a woman named Sandi Thompson brought a complaint of sexual harassment against the Speaker. The press has reported that Tory insiders were shopping Sandi Thompson's résumé around Queen's Park a week before the Speaker's lawyer released it. In other words, it would seem that a deliberate attempt was being made by Conservative insiders to smear the reputation of an alleged victim, perhaps an attempt at damage control.

Your government came into office promising to defend victims, but it would seem that some Conservative insiders have been trying to do exactly the opposite in shopping around the complainant's résumé. I want to ask the Premier, are you aware of these allegations and have you made any inquiries of your staff or other Queen's Park Conservative staff about their involvement in these activities?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): No, I'm not aware. I've never heard any allegations of that, and no Tory insider I know.

Mr Hampton: This was on September 14. This is a press release, an article that appeared in the Toronto press. It would appear in all of the press summaries that all of your members get and that your office gets. I'm sure that someone in your staff would have noticed this and brought it to your attention. I find it hard to believe, Premier, that you haven't been informed of this, that you wouldn't know of this, that your staff, who must be concerned about this, wouldn't have brought it to your attention.

1440

I ask you again, are you aware of this? Is anybody on your staff aware of this? Have they made any inquiries as to who the Tory insiders may have been who were shopping around this résumé and smearing the complainant?

Hon Mr Harris: No, I have not, and I would assume if there was a shred of evidence to it they would have brought it to my attention.

Mr Hampton: This is passing strange. This reminds me of — what was his name? — Richard Nixon. "I hear no evil, I see no evil, unless you thrust it under my face."

Let me quote the Premier in the Legislature on November 23, 1992. At that point you were expressing support for the federal rape shield law. You said: "We look at the federal rape shield law, supported by us all, brought in to protect victims of rape. The reason? There are people who think it's okay to try and smear a woman by raising her past or raising information irrelevant to the case at hand, particularly when she has become a victim."

Now, at other times it appears that you took these kinds of situations quite seriously. It appears that you spoke out on them quite specifically. How is it, Premier, that this could appear in the public press, that it could make its way into Queen's Park Today, which is the press clippings that you get, every other member of this Legislature gets and I would say probably everybody on your staff gets? How is it that this could appear in Queen's Park press clippings and that you didn't take it

seriously and nobody on your staff took it seriously? How could that be?

Hon Mr Harris: It could be there's not a shred of truth to it.

Mr Hampton: This is indeed Richard Nixon time.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question goes to the minister responsible for the destruction of the family support plan, otherwise known as the Attorney General.

Minister, women and children are suffering because you have in effect shut down the family support plan. You laid off 290 experienced staff and you have effectively closed the regional offices across this province. You have contracted some of the work out to the Royal Bank, but you've had to admit that it can't do the job.

Yesterday a number of women who are affected, including Judy Poulin of SCOPE, Support for Children, an Organization for Public Education, held a press conference to express her concern for the women and children who are not receiving the money they are legally entitled to because you have in effect shut down the family support plan. In attendance at the press conference was Ruby White, a single mother with cancer who has not received her family support payment even though her husband's employer has confirmed that the money was garnished from his wages.

What do you say to Ruby White, who has had to charge her medication on her credit card and has been unable to purchase textbooks for her son because she has not received the money that she is legally entitled to from the family support plan that you have in effect shut down?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'm particularly pleased to receive this question from the leader of the third party.

The complaints that he has about the family support plan have existed for many, many years. If I could provide you with some statistics, in November 1990, the family support plan had 80,652 cases in it. At that time the arrears in the plan were \$346.1 million. Only 23% of those in the plan in November 1990 were in full compliance. In June 1995, after the leader of the third party put his mark on the family support plan, the plan now had in it 140,000 cases, and I'd like to tell you that the arrears owing to women and children after this gentleman, this leader of the third party, had an opportunity to run the family support plan went from \$346 million to \$850 million. That's what the arrears went to.

I will also tell you that after they finished with the family support plan, no one could get through on the phone and no mail was being answered. I am now taking steps to reorganize the plan to ensure that women and children get timely payment and that arrears are being collected.

Mr Hampton: Let me say to the Attorney General, I think everybody in this chamber would agree that yes, there are some people out there who may be unemployed or may do everything that they can to avoid paying. They may even switch jobs. We recognize that. We're not

talking here about trying to get money from someone who is avoiding paying. Yes, that's a long-standing problem. What we're talking here is about people who send their cheque in, the employer sends the cheque in to the family support plan. This Attorney General has so screwed up the system that people can't even get those cheques any more. That's what's happened. This is not a case of chasing someone out there who doesn't have money. This is something you are clearly responsible for. People were getting this money before. The money was coming from the payor into the system and it was going to women and children in need. Because of your actions, because you put 290 experienced staff out of work, even these people can't get their cheques any more.

Let me ask you, since you created this screw-up, what are you going to do to fix it?

Hon Mr Harnick: The leader of the third party knows not of what he speaks, as usual. I will admit we had a difficulty with the plan, and for that I apologized. It is the intention of the family support plan to get money to people as fast as possible, and in that regard, as the first part of our restructuring, we have now increased by 1,000 cheques a day the number of cheques that we are able to process. We are now processing 5,000 cheques a day, versus 4,000 cheques a day. With our private sector partner, we are now able —

Interjections: Oh.

Hon Mr Harnick: I might add, as everyone says "Oh," that private sector partner was contracted by the member for London South.

Interjections: Oh.

Hon Mr Harnick: "Oh." I might tell you that we are now electronically processing cheques so that money is flowing faster than it's ever flowed before and we have increased by 25% the daily output of cheques in that plan. We are doing that during the course of the restructuring so that we will have a better plan and get money to women and children faster than has ever happened before.

Mr Hampton: Now we understand. From this Attorney General's perspective, this is not about women and children getting the money they're legally entitled to. This is about privatization; this is about being nice to his friends in the private sector. That's what it's all about.

The reality here is this: The offices in Thunder Bay have been closed, in effect; the offices in Sudbury have been closed, in effect; the regional offices in Hamilton, London, Windsor and Ottawa have, in effect, been closed. People who want to enquire about their family support cheques go into those offices and can't speak to anyone. They dial the 1-800 number — I guess because maybe it's a privatized 1-800 number now it's supposed to work more effectively — and they can't get through.

1450

Those women who came here yesterday came because they are not getting their cheques, came because they cannot provide for their children. All you have done in the time you have been Attorney General has made the system worse, except for your private sector friends, who probably enjoy the contracts they're getting. What are you going to do for Ruby White and all of the women who were here yesterday who can't get their family

support plan cheques, who are being forced into a very difficult situation by the decisions of you and your government?

Hon Mr Harnick: Let me explain very simply to the leader of the third party so he might understand it, so he might understand the first thing I want to say. Your party was the one that privatized that aspect of the family support plan. You may not want to admit it, but it was you, Howie.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): When you make a mistake, admit it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order. The member for Nipigon will come to order.

Hon Mr Harnick: As I indicated, there was a problem getting out a number of cheques. That problem has now been solved. We have in fact increased the cheques we're able to send out, so that women and children can get their money more quickly.

The problem we have and the problem we wrestle with is that when the NDP took over this plan it had \$346 million in arrears. When they left, the arrears had gone to \$850 million. During the course of that time, clients of the plan couldn't get through to seek help for a problem, letters couldn't get answered. The plan cries out for restructuring and I'm trying to restructure the plan.

I would think the opposition would be happy we're trying to solve the problems they created. I would think they would want to cooperate with us to get money into the hands of women and children. They don't really want to do that, but this government does. We are going to restructure this plan once and for all so that women and children can be treated properly and get the support that they need.

The Deputy Speaker: New question.

Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West): My question is to the Premier concerning the Attorney General and the facts surrounding the closing of the eight regional family support offices. I saw you applauding the previous answer of the Attorney General. If you really believe what he said, you're truly living in a cocoon. Let me tell you some of the facts your minister and the Ministry of the Attorney General did.

Firstly, it kept the process secret from regional staff, resulting in negligent and inadequate estimates of available staff for the transition. This was because of larger-than-expected numbers of buyouts. You didn't even know what was happening.

Secondly, you made insufficient banking arrangements for the new system, resulting in thousands of cheques not being cashed or deposited by the bank in a timely manner.

Thirdly, you transferred to a new computer system that was not fully operational.

Fourthly, you have been haphazardly storing and misplacing parts of thousands of client files.

Fifthly, you inadequately communicated to clients of the plan how the new system would work. They didn't know what was happening. They didn't even know where to send their cheques.

This is very important and I want you to listen carefully: By Mr Harnick's own admission, 7,000 single mothers, representing over 15,000 children, in this

province have had insufficient income — Premier, stop smiling; it's not a joke — insufficient money for food and clothing for periods of up to three months.

This level of incompetence, so fundamentally and unnecessarily punishing to the lives of innocent children, certainly cannot be tolerated by your government. Using your private sector approach to government, will you fire this minister for incompetence?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): If you want the facts, you should get them from the Attorney General.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): The question, Charlie, is, are you going to be fired?

Hon Mr Harnick: No, I'm not going to be fired.

The member says we aren't doing a good enough job getting money out to women and children. In the past, absolutely that has been the case. That's why we're restructuring the plan: to do it better. So far, we have increased the number of cheques that we can handle and process in a day by 25%. So that aspect of the plan is improving.

Let me tell you a little bit about the regional offices. The regional offices were servicing, on average, 60 people a day each. That's 480 people. The reason those 480 people went to those regional offices was because they couldn't get through on the phone lines. On some days, upwards of 50,000 calls a day come to the family support plan. What we are doing is restructuring the plan and hiring a new workforce that will be trained and able to deal with problems as they come in. We will be able to deal with the problems as people phone. There won't be referrals; they will be dealt with directly and the problems will be solved.

We are also adding new enforcement to the family support plan. I will be bringing a bill to this House very shortly, and I hope that the member will support the bill, because it will help get more money to women and children who need it.

Mr Chiarelli: Even though, although we disagree, there may be policy reasons for changing to the new system, the fact of the matter is that the transition has been mangled, and not only has the process been mangled but it's mangling the lives of a lot of people. On a very personal level, this has affected the lives of many people, people who can't pay their rent, buy food for their kids, pay for back-to-school requirements. We have not even heard an apology from you for what you have done to their lives. That's number one.

Secondly, you don't have the ability now even to honour your legal obligation to provide a client with a record as required by law. The stuff is packed in boxes, clients' information is in different boxes, shipped to central headquarters at different times. They can't even assemble it. The computer is down half the time. When the few people who do get through speak to a live body, they get on the computer screen and then they say: "There's not enough information here to provide an answer. We'll have to get back to you."

It is in one hell of a mess, and that's not the NDP, that's not another government, that's you, Minister. I want to know whether or not you are going to come clean and share the facts with us, instead of giving us these BS answers. It's in a total mess. What are you going to do?

Hon Mr Harnick: Let me first say that the member is wrong when he says I haven't apologized and haven't apologized publicly, because I have. No one felt more terrible than I did about the difficulty that we had.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): You blamed it on the computer.

Hon Mr Harnick: No, I accept full responsibility for what happened. A mistake was made, for which I took full responsibility.

Ms Lankin: No, you blamed it on the computer.

Hon Mr Harnick: No one in this province felt worse than I did about the delay in those cheques. I appreciate that they don't want to believe what I'm saying, but that's their prerogative.

We are restructuring this plan, and we're restructuring it so that the moneys can flow more quickly, so that people can get the money in a timely way and so that the very things that the member says about people phoning and not being able to get an answer will no longer be the case.

1500

That has been the history of this plan from the beginning. I have had letters from every person in the opposition who, long before the restructuring, were complaining about the inability to get an answer. This plan cries out for restructuring, and that is what we are doing.

Again, if it wasn't good enough the last time, let me reiterate to the members how terrible I felt, and I still feel, that there was a delay in cheques. We have increased our capacity to deliver those cheques more quickly. Now we are going to get busy and complete the job so that we will have a better family support plan, and I hope that the member from Ottawa is going to support me in doing just that.

The Deputy Speaker: New question.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a question for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, I hope you don't end up being an apologist for the Attorney General today in answer to my question, because the AG's answer today was total hogwash and a refusal to accept responsibility for a crisis in the family plan system.

The fact is, women who were getting cheques are not getting them today. Forty per cent of the staff have been laid off. Experienced staff, who, I may add, under our government plan would have kept their jobs, were laid off. Inexperienced staff people have replaced them. Guess what they are telling people like Ruby White on the phone when they've managed to get through after days and days. Some of them are saying, "Get a job."

This is happening out there, Minister. It is totally inappropriate, and I ask you today to speak up and do your job, speak up for the women of Ontario, in this case vulnerable women, and answer my question. I hope you do not switch it, because you are the minister responsible for women's issues and I want to hear you say today you will do your part to fix this problem.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Obviously all of us have been concerned about the family support plan as long as I've been in government, and your government in particular was. Last year less than one third of all cases were in full compliance,

and administratively I think that's very important. Less than one third of the mothers of those children did not get the money that they legally should have received, so we moved forward to do something about it.

The question was, what am I going to do about it? I have been working, as have other members of this Legislative Assembly and members of the opposition, by the way, who have been in contact with the Attorney General and myself, with individual cases in our own ridings as recently as three weeks and two weeks ago to do the job for them. Some of us have had terrific success. In London North we're down to some nine people and we did have some 60 complaints. It was in fact extremely, extremely difficult for those families, and the Attorney General, as he has said today, was particularly concerned about it and extremely sorry and apologized.

The point is, we'll do our best, and if you've got cases like this Mrs White, you should get that case to the Attorney General so he can help you fix it, just like everybody else in this House. It was extremely unfortunate and all of us regret it.

Ms Churley: Minister, that answer is not adequate. Your suggestion that we deal with this crisis, this problem on a case-by-case basis is absolutely ridiculous. I know that the member for Sudbury has sent in about 40 cases and has got about four responses. At my constituency office alone, I can't keep count of them. We have so many emergencies, people like Ruby White, who's in a crisis — and let me add here should be congratulated for her courage. She's got a 12-year-old son, she's got cancer and she's actually quite spunky and is able to carry on quite well. She's on the phone for days. My constituency office has been on the phone for days. We can't get through to people. I say to all the members in the House today, call your constituency offices when you get out of here and hand them all over to the Attorney General every day if that's the way you want to deal with crises out there, because we've got them, Minister.

I would ask you again: There is a crisis, and we have in the gallery today Judy Poulin from Support for Children, an Organization for Public Education. They are saying that there is a serious problem that wasn't there before. Will you commit to meeting with Ms Poulin to talk about the serious problems in the system and then go and meet with your Attorney General and demand that he fix them?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The answer is yes.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I have a question today to the Solicitor General. On June 6 you made a statement in this House about the alleged beatings of young offenders at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre occurring after the Bluewater Youth Centre riot. In this statement you expressed your concern for the young offenders' safety by stating that you had asked that the eight young offenders be transferred from the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre to Sprucedale. You also said, "We have taken a number of steps to ensure the safety of the young offenders who are in custody under the Ministry of Correctional Services."

Minister, what were these steps that you took in June?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): There were five directives issued on August 7 which dealt with the detention of young offenders in adult areas using properly trained staff for young offender supervision, the use of isolation for more than 48 hours, dealing with young offender disturbances and establishing a complaints procedure for young offenders. Those were the directives issued on August 7.

Mr Ramsay: Minister, I'm a little concerned that it took you to August from June, when you said on June 6 you would undertake these steps and now it's August that you said you brought these steps forward.

As you and I and everybody in Ontario are painfully aware, since that time a death occurred of a young offender while under your custody in the Ministry of Correctional Services. Of course, this is doubly a tragedy because all of us knew that this particular young offender was in danger and you and your staff knew that, the potential danger to this young offender.

I know you're not going to comment on this particular incident at this time because of the ongoing investigations, but what all Ontarians would like to know is what further steps now, since August, you have taken to make sure that our young offenders in your custody are safe and that none of our young offenders have to pay the ultimate price while in your care.

Hon Mr Runciman: We concur, with respect to the death, that it was indeed a tragedy, and I'm sure all members will express their condolences to the family of the young man in this situation. We've indicated that we are undertaking a number of initiatives to reform the corrections system in Ontario, and certainly one of those deals with the training of correctional officers.

This member, when he was the minister of corrections, outlined his frustration publicly with the training processes for correctional officers, and regrettably nothing was forthcoming with respect to changes. We've announced that those changes are going to take place. They're going to take place before correctional officers go on the job. At the end of four weeks of basic training, if you will, they will be put into streams so that anyone going into the young offender system as a correctional officer will get specialized training dealing with young offenders prior to assuming their duties. The same will be the case for the adult section of corrections as well.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is also to the Minister of Correctional Services and it is respecting the tragic death of James Lonnee. Minister, I agree with you that this death is a tragedy. What I'm concerned about is that I think it is a tragedy that could have been avoided.

Three months ago in this Legislature, when there was debate and concern with respect to the incidents that took place at Bluewater and at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, you promised that no young offender would ever again be placed in an adult jail, in an adult detention unit. Perhaps if that promise had been kept, James Lonnee might have been alive today.

1510

It's two weeks since his death. I would like to know what inquiries you have made and what you have found out with respect to the decisions that were taken that led

a young offender, James Lonnee, and others, to be placed in an adult detention centre, to be doubled up in what should have been a segregation cell; the decisions that were taken that led to what James Lonnee feared the most: his murder.

Hon Mr Runciman: I'm sure the member is aware that there is still a police investigation under way. Although charges have been laid with respect to this particular situation, the police investigation is still under way. We have not received signoff, if you will, from the police involved in this investigation to conduct an internal ministerial investigation to determine if indeed any of the directives which were issued by this ministry with respect to treatment of young offenders or policy guidelines that have been in place for some time were violated.

I can assure the member and other members of this House that we will get to the bottom of this, and if directives were violated, we will take the appropriate action.

Ms Lankin: Not good enough, Minister. We went through a month in this Legislature with you putting off answer after answer because there was this investigation, that investigation, this court procedure, this internal inquiry, this outside consultant coming in. You've never answered a single question here with respect to what is going on in your ministry.

I'm not asking about the circumstances that took place in the cell that led to the tragic death, I'm asking about the decisions that took place in your ministry. I'm asking about what you did over the course of this summer. Surely you cared enough about those 40 young offenders, those 40 teenagers who were being kept by your ministry, to get regular briefings about what was happening to them in the system, about how they were being treated. Surely you were informed about the fears of James Lonnee. There were only 40 kids. Surely you knew about the concerns he was raising, about not wanting to be placed in an adult centre, about not wanting to be moved to Wellington, about not wanting to be doubled up in a cell.

What steps did you take to live up to your promise, to live up to the promise of your Premier to protect the kids who are in our custody so that parents never need fear, never need worry again?

Hon Mr Runciman: This concern would be more convincing if the member opposite and the government of the day had done much more to deal with quite comparable situations in many instances.

We are moving. In a report commissioned by the former government in 1993, Judge Inger Hansen indicated her concerns with respect to the workplace culture in corrections. She said: "The culture in the ministry's work environment was not the result of a few acts. The problems that this investigation uncovered have a long history."

I can cite a number of occasions. I'll indicate one: a 1993 allegation by a young offender who alleges that he was choked unconscious and sexually assaulted by a number of fellow young offenders. That matter is still before the courts, but those kinds of situations were not dealt with in a meaningful manner by the former government.

This is the only government with the political courage to deal with the real issues. We've outlined a very

significant program of review of the whole system, a system-wide review that no one has undertaken in this country, let alone this province. We're moving forward where past governments failed to act.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings): I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Over the course of the summer I have received a great many calls in my riding concerning the poor shape of the pavement on Highway 33 between Bath and Adolphustown. Highway 33 is an important tourist road also known as the Loyalist Parkway. Considering the economic importance of this road to both the local community and the province, I would like to ask what plans your ministry has for the rehabilitation of this very important highway.

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Let me first say that I'm glad to see all my friends again. I want to thank the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings for his question. I had the opportunity of driving on that particular road with the member during the summer and I certainly concur with the concern the member is referring to. The ministry does recognize the poor shape and we have plans to completely reconstruct Highway 33 from Bath to Adolphustown. This rehabilitation will bring the highway up to the same standard as the rest of Highway 33 towards Kingston. Furthermore, the ministry has taken great care to maintain the natural and historical integrity of this highway.

Mr Fox: I appreciate those words. Over the course of the past year you have said that you would like to restore Ontario's highways to their former glory. The budget saw an increase of \$140 million to this effect. Can the minister tell this House what progress has been made?

Hon Mr Palladini: Ontario's economy and prosperity are directly related to the state of our highway infrastructure. The additional \$140-million increase to this year's provincial spending on highway rehabilitation brings it up to a total of \$375 million, compared to the previous government's average of \$240 million over the last six years.

We are investing in the future of this province. I want to share some of the examples with the honourable members: Highway 401 near Puce Road, Essex-Kent; Highway 7 near Baldwin Street, Durham-York; Highway 17 near Iron Bridge, Algoma; Highway 43, near Alexandria and Monkland, East Grenville; Highway 11, the Severn River bridge through Gravenhurst. Increased levels of funding, along with a commitment to the initiatives detailed in our business plan, will help keep this important highway network from further deterioration thanks to the last two governments.

RENT REVIEW

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the sham of a committee he sponsored to ram through his New Directions discussion paper. On August 19th, you opened the rent control committee with remarks that charged the committee with the task of studying proposals introduced in the New Directions

paper and making recommendations that could be tabled in this House. It was my understanding that the report would be tabled today. My party prepared its own report, due to the failure of the full committee to produce a report reflective of the recommendations of the 260-some presentations, not to mention those submitted in writing by those who were not granted space to appear, due to the inadequate consultation period.

You heard from tenants, landlords, developers, social advocates. They agree that your proposal to wipe out rent control in this province will not achieve the goals you set out: to lower rents for tenants, to stimulate the development of more affordable apartments and to provide greater protection for tenants. How can you ignore the recommendations of 260 presenters? It's obvious that neither you, the parliamentary assistant nor your Tory colleagues listened to any deputants to the committee and it's obviously reflected in the writing of the report. Nevertheless, I always believed that the report you have was written long before you even heard from any of the presenters.

1520

Can you assure this House also that no legislation will be written to dismantle the existing rent control system and therefore you will not implement your disastrous decontrol system?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): The member is right; I understand that the report from the committee is being tabled this afternoon. I must say that I was terribly disappointed when the opposition members walked out of that committee without taking the opportunity to play a part in producing the report.

What we did was go to the people of Ontario with a balanced program for rent control. We've asked for their input. We will now take that input into consideration when we're developing the legislation.

SPEAKER'S CONDUCT

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I rise on a point of order to request the members of the House to give unanimous consent for this House to debate motion number 25 on the order paper: "That the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario no longer enjoys the confidence of this House." I would hope that the members would give unanimous consent.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is not agreed.

Motions?

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I move that notwithstanding standing orders 8(a) and 96(a), the House will not meet on the morning of —

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order —

Hon David Johnson: — Thursday, September 26, 1996, to consider private members' public —

Interjections: Point of order.

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order: I would interrupt the proceedings of the House, if I may.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Excuse me just a minute.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I had given the floor to the minister —

Interjection: She was up earlier.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I will rule on the point of order afterwards. The minister will continue.

Hon David Johnson: Notwithstanding standing order 96(h) —

Interjections.

Hon David Johnson: — the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 39, 40, 41 and 42 —

Interjections.

Hon David Johnson: — and that Mr Ouellette and Mrs Marland exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

Interjections.

Mrs McLeod: It's not disruptive. May I please place my point of order?

The Deputy Speaker: You may not.

Mrs McLeod: On what grounds, Mr Speaker?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister had been given the floor. He was in the middle of his motion. I will deal with your point as soon as I have finished.

Mrs McLeod: You will deal with my point of order as soon as the minister has completed —

The Deputy Speaker: As soon as this item is done.

Mrs McLeod: This is somewhat unusual, Mr Speaker, but I will accept that.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Johnson moves that notwithstanding standing orders 8(a) and 96(a), the House will not meet on the morning of Thursday, September 26, 1996 to consider private members' public business; and notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 39, 40, 41 and 42; and that Mr Ouellette and Mrs Marland exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

Mrs McLeod: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker, because I believe that all of us have come into the House today facing what is a completely unprecedented situation in the history of this Legislature, and potentially in the history of any Legislature. I did not rise on this point of order in order to be obstructionist in any way. I simply want a clarification of the way in which the matter that we all know is before us is going to be dealt with. I think all of us need that and deserve that explanation.

We're all aware there has been a motion of non-confidence in the Speaker, which was placed by the New Democratic Party 24 hours before the House resuming, and it was placed within time to be considered today. I

would simply ask for a clarification from the government House leader as to whether the motion is to be called; if not, when it's to be called, and why a decision has been made to delay calling that motion.

The Deputy Speaker: That is a point of order, but it is not my place —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On the point of order raised by the leader of the official opposition, Mr Speaker, I think it is imperative, on a very, very important matter, for us to know how the government and the assembly will be proceeding. It is a matter of significant, substantial importance for this assembly as a whole, for each of the individual members, and certainly for the occupant of the high office of Speaker in this House. If the matter is not to be dealt with today as far as the government is concerned, then is it to be dealt with subsequently this week, and when does the government intend this matter to be debated and voted on?

We believe that this matter is of such importance that it should take precedence over all other business before the assembly. That is why the motion was tabled yesterday and proper notice was given. That is why we, as members of this assembly, believe that it is imperative that the matter be dealt with and that members be able to express their views and a decision be made by the assembly as soon as possible. We believe it should have precedence over all other business.

If the government doesn't accept that position, then what is the government's position, when will the matter be debated and when will we vote on it?

Hon David Johnson: I wish to assure all members of the House that I and the government, and I assume every member of this House, take this situation very seriously. It is of grave importance. It's of grave importance to us all as members of this House, it's, of course, of significant importance to the Speaker and, I might add, to everyone involved in the matter.

I have attempted to maintain contact with the House leaders, I've attempted to poll, I guess, or have contact with as many members of the Legislature — naturally more on this side of the House, I'm sure you understand, as opposed to the other side of the House — and I wish to outline at this point what the government or what I propose in terms of how this should be dealt with.

1530

What I have found is that many members consider the investigator's report to be a significant component of this issue. There is, I think, an understandable concern of having to make a very important decision, affecting people's lives very deeply, without being made aware of the investigator's report. There has been some discussion about the availability of that report. I believe that the members of this House should have access to the information in that report. Many of the members of this House have expressed to me that they need that information. I might say, on the other side, some members have expressed that they do not need that information. But many have told me that to make an informed and fair and just decision on this matter, they need that information.

I propose to set up a mechanism whereby they would get that information. What I am proposing is that this matter will be dealt with on Thursday of this week. This is a matter that, as has been mentioned by my honourable

colleagues across the floor, should be dealt with as quickly as possible. I believe that dealing with this matter on Thursday will allow those members of the House who need the information — information which was only made available for the first time to the House leaders yesterday and which virtually nobody in this House has had access to — to have that information, have an informed opinion and deal with this matter on Thursday of this week.

Mrs McLeod: On a point of order related to the second point of order, if I may, Mr Speaker: Again I rise because I believe that this is an issue of both great sensitivity and great importance to all members of the Legislature. We all have a responsibility for dealing with the matter before us. All of us in our caucus have attempted to recognize due process and fairness in the carrying out of the investigation of the specific allegation which has been made about the Speaker of the House.

Having said that, we came today prepared to vote on a non-confidence motion on other issues. Recognizing that the immediate allegation has not been resolved, there are many other issues which have eroded our confidence in the Speaker.

The fact that you're suggesting this vote be called on Thursday: I want to be absolutely clear as to what further information you believe will have been provided by Thursday. I'm assuming that the specific allegation will not yet have been resolved fully. I make that assumption not necessarily knowing that. I also believe I heard in your answer that you would be releasing the information of the report to members of your caucus. As you know, there has been some legal question about that, and I think it's important for the members of our caucus and for our House leader that we know whether in fact you consider us to be free to release that information to our caucuses, believing that it has a significant impact on the vote on Thursday.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): On a related point of order, Mr Speaker: It's related to both points of order that have been raised. I believe that we are placed in a difficult position as members of the Legislature, when we rely on the Speaker of this Legislature to protect our individual rights with respect to the proceedings in this House and proceedings of business of government as they transpire in this Legislature.

The very fact that the Speaker, through his counsel, is the one who has taken actions to deny members of this Legislature the very information that they would need to take appropriate decisions is what has led our caucus to arrive at the decision that we have lost confidence in this Speaker.

I have no Speaker to go to today to protect my rights, to provide me with appropriate information, with informed information with respect to whether or not I should ever even take receipt of this report, should you offer it, sir. There have been legal challenges that have been set out. Our House leader has refused receipt of that report as a result of those legal challenges set out by the Speaker and by the Speaker's counsel.

Interjections: Threats.

Ms Lankin: Threats of legal action. We have no Speaker on which to rule with respect to the rights of the members of the House. It is untenable that the govern-

ment should choose to leave us in this situation by putting this off until Thursday — until, I would suggest, you've had time to consult further with the members of your caucus because you didn't get the decision you wanted out of a caucus meeting this morning.

Every member of this assembly has been threatened with legal action, the actions of a member who has public duty, public responsibility, the Speaker of this Legislature. That is untenable. We have lost confidence in that individual in holding that office. We have a right, as members of this Legislature, to debate that issue and to take a collective decision, and it is not appropriate for the government to make a decision to deny us that opportunity. This is a decision of the members of the Legislature. I put it to you, sir, that you are thwarting the desire of the members of the Legislature for political purposes. This should proceed. We should have an opportunity to debate this and to take a decision.

Hon David Johnson: I don't disagree. As a matter of fact, I strongly support the member when she says this body should have the right to debate this, and indeed this body will have the opportunity to debate this in the very near future. I suggest that Thursday will allow those members, and I think we have a right for those members — and I suggest to you those members are on both sides of this House — who may feel that an important part of this issue is the report from the investigator.

It is said that there has been a legal threat, but I can also tell you that the House leaders have been made aware of a legal report generated through the human resources director of the Legislative Assembly, and that indicates that indeed the members of this House have the right to see this report. The report is in the possession of the House leaders.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): You table it.

Hon David Johnson: Those House leaders who chose to accept the report have it, and what we are being told is that they have the right to distribute that to their members: not to table it in public, not to make it a public report, not to give the report to the media. I mean, with a little bit of common sense we would understand that a report dealing with a sensitive matter such as this would not be a report that would become public. However, the 130 members of this Legislature are the employer and, accordingly, they do have the right to see this report.

What I am simply suggesting is that over the next short period of time the members on both sides of this House would have the opportunity to see that report, to understand this issue. Some members have been asking for that right. I believe they deserve that right, and then to deal with the issue on Thursday. I think that's a reasonable way to approach it.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With the greatest respect to the government House leader, the government House leader is aware that the legal counsel to the Legislative Assembly advised the House leaders and advised the members of the Board of Internal Economy that, yes, in his view the members were entitled to have the report of the independent investigator and to peruse that report in order to be able to make decisions. He also, though, informed us that if that report were discussed outside of this assembly, the legal counsel for Mr Speaker McLean might have a basis for legal action.

You can't have it both ways. You can't read a report, you can't discuss it in the Legislature, and then not have it dealt with in the public. We are put in a very difficult situation where the legal counsel informed us that we should have access to the report, we should be able to debate it in the House, but we shouldn't talk about it outside of this place because we might be subject to legal action. That is why we are concerned. How does the government House leader intend to deal with this? I should make it clear that because of the legal advice we received I did not take receipt of that report, because frankly, I don't want to end up in court for trying to do my job as a legislator.

1540

Mrs McLeod: On a further point of order, Mr Speaker: As spokesperson for my caucus, I think it's critical that I make it very clear to the government House leader that our caucus has indicated overwhelmingly that it was prepared to deal with the motion of non-confidence without regard to the investigation of the current allegation and therefore without regard to the contents of the report. The Speaker of the House has irretrievably lost the confidence of our caucus and therefore the release of the report and the question of whether or not this investigation has been fully carried out and fully resolved is not an issue that would affect our caucus's willingness to vote today.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): To the point of order, Mr Speaker: As a member of the Board of Internal Economy, I received a letter from Mr McLean's — the Speaker's — lawyer, Mr Teplitsky, which threatened me. That letter said that I could not discuss or divulge the contents of a report. I have to tell you that when I received that letter, at that moment any confidence I had in the judgement of the Speaker ended. That he would authorize a letter from his solicitor that threatened a member of this Legislature, who has the right by virtue of this office to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the people and speak about how public life is about public scrutiny and accountability; that he, the Speaker of this Legislature, would assume that he could direct his lawyer to take away that right from a member of this Legislature was sufficient for me to vote today on a motion of non-confidence because, sir, I have no confidence in Speaker McLean's ability to be fair in this House.

I say to the government House leader that his actions in the handling of this unfortunate affair, from beginning with the attempt to smear an alleged victim to the taking of a lie detector test and ultimately to saying to his solicitor to write a letter to members of this Legislature about this unfortunate affair, and the suggestion that rules that have been put in place for bureaucrats, because that's what it is, due process for bureaucrats, should apply to the Speaker of this Legislature, whom we rely on, whose good judgement we rely on to guard the privileges and the rights of members of this Legislature — he crossed the line and cannot expect to have the confidence of members of this House.

I implore you to allow a vote of confidence in the Speaker today so that we can move on from this unhappy matter, because the content of that report, in my judgement and I believe in the judgement of many members of

this House, is irrelevant when it comes to the confidence we have in the Speaker.

Mr Hampton: Same point, Speaker: For the government House leader to somehow assert that the issue here now is the report totally misses the point. The issue here is that we are in an entirely unprecedented situation. The Speaker of this House, through his solicitor, has attempted to deprive members of this House of the information that they should have as members. That is what has happened. This has got nothing to do now with what may or may not be in that report. This has got everything to do with the Speaker of this House trying to shackle each and every member in this House from doing his or her duty. That is the issue which is before this House, and for the government to try to move away from that, for the government to try to then interpose something else, is utter nonsense.

This is an unprecedented situation in the parliaments of the Commonwealth, that someone who sits in the Speaker's chair should attempt to use a threat from a solicitor to shackle the members of this Legislature and to stop them from making a decision. That is what the motion of non-confidence is about; that is where we are at at this point in time.

Frankly, whatever the report says, now is irrelevant. That a Speaker would show this disrespect for this Parliament and for every other tradition of Parliament is, as I say, totally unprecedented. Anyone who would purport to be Speaker and then take this kind of action is not deserving —

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Not worthy.

Mr Hampton: — not worthy of being called Speaker, not worthy of the position. That is why this motion of non-confidence has been brought. This House cannot sit, this House cannot go forward in such an unprecedented situation, and if government members think they can, then they are denying every tradition of Parliament in trying to move ahead.

Hon David Johnson: Mr Speaker, there's conjecture on what point the members of this House may consider to be the most significant in this debate, and when the debate is held indeed the leader of the third party may be correct; that may be the issue which weighs most heavily on most of the minds or all of the minds or some of the minds of the members of this Legislature. But this is an issue that we would all agree has to be determined by all the members of this Legislature. In terms of how each individual makes up their mind and what information each individual member needs to make up their mind, I think we should allow for the fact that maybe some people come at this issue with a slightly different approach than any of the previous speakers have indicated.

Some of the members have said to me, and I will say a number of members have said to me, that they feel the information contained in the investigator's report is of importance to them in making their decision on this matter. I'm trying to understand why we should deny them that right. Now, if this report had been available to them for some period of time then I would say you may have a point.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Who makes that available?

Hon David Johnson: The report will be made available to those. From a solicitor representing the Legislative Assembly we have a ruling that indeed those members who wish to have this report, who wish to have this information, should indeed have that information. If that's important in their mind in making a decision, who here today should say that they should be denied that information, denied that report? I don't think that will lead necessarily to the best, most fair and just decision that could be made, and I believe all of us here today want everybody to be comfortable in their minds in terms of making a fair and just decision on this matter. That's all I'm suggesting. I believe that in dealing with this at the earliest opportunity, which I think is Thursday, we will accomplish that.

Mr Hampton: The government House leader makes a valiant effort, but he misses the point. What the Speaker may or may not have done with respect to the complaint that was raised by one of his employees is not the issue here. The issue here is that the Speaker, through a deliberate act, has tried to shackle the members of this Legislature. The Speaker has shown disrespect for the members of this Legislature. The Speaker has attempted to deny to the members of this Legislature the opportunity to determine the process that happens here. That is the issue.

The report, what is in the report, the events around the report are no longer the issue. Those might be dealt with at some time in the future. The issue now is the conduct of the Speaker with respect to this place, with respect to trying to deprive this place of information that members of this Legislature are entitled to in order to do their job properly. The Speaker's conduct goes to the heart, to the integrity of the process here. That is the point. For you to try to avoid that in itself shows disrespect for this place.
1550

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: The government House leader has to understand what's happening here. The government House leader is trying to say that we, the members of the assembly, should walk back, take a look at the report and then try to make a judgement about the Speaker in regard to how we deal with it. The House leader misses the point. The point is simply this: What happened was that yesterday that report was brought before the Board of Internal Economy. At that point the Speaker, through his lawyer, sent a letter to the members of the board and said that if that report is released and if we as members look at it, read it and talk about it, we will be sued. How are we, quite frankly, able to deal in a context such as that?

If the Speaker wanted us to deal with this in due process, the Speaker would have removed himself from the process altogether and allowed things to take their normal course. That is not what has happened. The Speaker in this case has jumped into this and, through his lawyer, said that we, the employers of the Speaker — the Speaker is responsible to the 130 members of this assembly — are not to deal with the matters within the report. Thus, how can we make a judgement?

I say to the government House leader that quite clearly the issue here is not so much the report; the issue is the conduct of the Speaker, how he has dealt with this entire situation from the beginning and how he is dealing with

it now, specifically through his lawyer. To try to say that we will wait a couple of days and allow you as the government House leader to try to rein in your backbenchers so that they can maybe come around to your point of view, which I think is not too far from where the opposition is, is only basically saying — and I think an admission — that your own government backbenchers are having problems with the direction you would want to take.

This matter is serious. Nobody in this assembly is happy about what has happened. Nobody in this assembly is happy about what has to take place. But there is a decision that has been made by the Speaker. The Speaker has done things. The Speaker has dealt with this badly. The Speaker has threatened the members of this assembly. How is it that we as members of this assembly can do our jobs when we are under threat by our own Speaker?

So I say to you, House leader, it doesn't cut it. The issue here is not the report. The issue is simply that the Speaker has threatened the members of this assembly. The Speaker has dealt with this badly from the beginning. He, through his lawyers and by other means that we heard in question period today, released the information of the person to the media. The Speaker has not dealt well with this.

I say to you: Think clearly and come back to this assembly and tell us that you are going to debate this matter today. We will deal with it forthwith. We will deal with it so that we can move on with the business of the House and deal with the issues of the people of this province and not have to drag our way through this particular issue for an inordinate amount of time.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind the House that I do not have the ability to deal with your points of order. I do rule on the orders of this House and to that extent I control what goes on. There is a motion before the House. I would like to ask that we proceed with debate on it.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The government House leader, I think in a very reasonable way, attempts to say, who would deny information to the members of the House? The answer is simple. Mr Speaker McLean would deny the information to the members of the House, and that's what this is all about. The point we're trying to make is that we believe the government should be proceeding forthwith with this matter so that it can be debated and dealt with and decisions can be made by the individual members of the assembly with regard to the office of the Speaker. Who would deny the information to the members? Unfortunately, Mr Speaker McLean.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to repeat that I don't have the ability to rule on these points of order, but it would appear that under ordinary circumstances it would be something that usually the House leaders would meet on and sort out. I rule on what goes on in this House and I'm not able to rule on those points of order. I would like the House to proceed with the business as the orderly House that you are.

Mr Bisson: I think this makes the issue even more difficult to deal with. You, as the Deputy Speaker, have stood up and, first of all, have refused to acknowledge members on points of order earlier. That's a separate

issue. But then in your ruling just now, or in your discussion with this House — I'm not so sure it was a ruling — you have said that you don't have the ability to rule on points of order. Where do we find ourselves? We find ourselves without a Speaker, quite frankly. It is your responsibility, as the Deputy Speaker, to deal with the issues that are brought before this House on points of order, and you should have the authority to be able to do that. If not, I think we're in need of another Speaker.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Mr Speaker, I heard you mention that there's a motion before the House. I'd like you to tell me what the motion before the House is.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Johnson moved that notwithstanding standing orders 8(a) and 96(a), the House will not meet on the morning of Thursday, September 26, 1996, to consider private members' public business; and notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items number 39, 40, 41 and 42; and that Mr Ouellette and Mrs Marland exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): If I might, Mr Speaker: I have been listening carefully to this debate and I must say, I have a great deal of sympathy for the untenable position in which you now find yourself. This is very difficult. It's a mess. There is no precedent of which I'm aware, and it is, I think, urgent and pressing business.

In the normal course of events, the first thing we do as a newly elected Parliament is to choose a Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, I wanted to clear up if you were debating the motion or were on a point of order.

Mr Conway: On a point of order.

Again, I would not want to be in your situation. You are in one hell of a tough spot and I think we owe it to you to try to come to some resolution.

Let me say at the outset that this is, I think, an urgent priority with which the House must deal. I haven't talked to anybody. I've been away. I come back today to encounter the situation that we all face.

I also have some sympathy for the government House leader. He too is in a very difficult situation.

This is an issue that faces the assembly as a legislative body. Al McLean is our Speaker. We put him there. He is there because we had an election a year ago. The fundamental question with which we must deal is, does Mr Speaker McLean continue to enjoy the confidence of this assembly? That's the fundamental question with which we must deal, and it seems to me that until that question is dealt with, we're not going to be able to do anything else.

I want to say that over the course of 21 years, we have on at least one other occasion of which I'm aware faced a direct motion of censure of the Speaker. If I'm not mistaken, it was November 1981 when the then third party — the now third party — lost its patience with Mr Speaker Turner. A motion of censure, as I recall it, was put, debated — I think Don MacDonald, former leader of the CCF-NDP, put the motion. It was debated and it was voted upon. Interesting that at that time the then government party, the Progressive Conservative Party, headed

by Mr Davis, and the Liberal Party, led then by Stuart Smith, sustained Mr Speaker Turner. The New Democratic Party, as I recall, voted en bloc against Mr Turner. He continued, as I think he had every right to continue, because it was clear to him and to any fairminded person who looked at the issue that two of the three parties and an overwhelming majority of members of the assembly voted to sustain him, made it very plain they had confidence in Mr Speaker Turner.

1600

But it is all about confidence, that intangible, immeasurable quality. I must say that over the last few weeks, when I see my Speaker having to take a lie detecting test, when I receive from an agent of my Speaker a directive telling me that I had better not open my mouth about certain subjects or I might be sued, I have to tell you, speaking personally, that ends my confidence. My confidence, I'm sorry to say, in Mr Speaker McLean ended when I received word of his agent's direction around what I might and might not deal with with respect to related matters. I respect the right of 128 other members to come to their own conclusion in that respect, but it is about confidence.

I want to recall that it was 10 years ago this summer in the Dominion Parliament that Mr Speaker Bosley, in a case that not very many people seem to remember, John Bosley, elected by the Parliament of Canada, chosen at the September 4, 1984, general election, was in deep trouble with his parliamentary colleagues. In fact, Mr Speaker Bosley was forced from his chair in September 1986 because for whatever reason or reasons, he lost the confidence of the House. He apparently also lost the confidence of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's agents. But lest we forget, there are some precedents about which I think we should take cognizance. I would have thought John Bosley would have been an excellent Speaker. But for whatever reason, and in that case, as I recall it, members were annoyed about everything from too many violins at dinner parties to — well, such is the stuff of confidence.

No Speaker — no Tory, no Liberal, no New Democrat, no Reformer, no independent — is going to be able to sustain himself or herself without the confidence of the assembly. That is not to say, as the 1981 Ontario precedent makes plain, that one should expect everyone to support a Speaker. I'm sure that if the ballot that chose Mr McLean was made public, it would be clear he did not win with a unanimous vote, I say as I look across at my friend from Mississauga South and think about my friend from Carleton East. We know we had a vote. We had several candidates, good people all. One person won, but it wasn't unanimous, and no fairminded legislator can be expected to hold any occupant of the Speaker's chair to unanimity throughout the piece. I don't expect that and I don't expect that other members are going to agree with me in my assessment of what constitutes confidence either.

But I have to say, speaking for myself, that when my Speaker is on the news talking about some lie detecting test he took, when I get word that my Speaker's legal agent is threatening members of the assembly, whose protection is the Speaker's job, that, "You better not open your mouth because you could be sued" — and other

members, the member for Oriole and the member for Beaches-Woodbine, among others, spoke eloquently to that point — from my point of view, it's over. It's over not just for Mr Speaker McLean. Any one of us who gets to that point, for whatever good or bad reason — and I'm sure if John Bosley were here, he'd say there was no small measure of unfairness in the conclusions that some members of the Parliament of Canada came to that forced him from office in September 1986, but it happened. Bosley, I think, made a wise if difficult decision when he simply withdrew from the piece, because he felt, he got the message that the jig was up, that confidence was substantially lost.

I was also looking — and I'm not going to belabour the point — there are other cases we have in this country. There's a very interesting book in the library that somebody might read. It's about Mr Speaker Anglin of the Dominion Parliament in the 1870s. He got himself into an interesting pickle. He was a journalist; interesting. Perhaps I should mention that, given Mr Walkom's column this morning. Mr Anglin was a journalist who became Speaker and who happened to be Speaker at the same time as his Saint John, New Brunswick printing house did all of the patronage printing for the MacKenzie Liberal government of the time. Not surprisingly, some of the Tories felt that this violated the Independence of Parliament Act, and Mr Speaker Anglin was forced from the Speaker's Chair in late 1877.

George Drew, to bring it to a more contemporary point, made a very eloquent speech as leader of the federal opposition in Ottawa during the famous pipeline debate, which some older members might remember. That's another case in the Canadian context where a Speaker became the subject of a very heated parliamentary crisis. On that occasion, George Drew, former Conservative Premier of Ontario, then leader of the Conservative opposition in Ottawa, put on the orders and notices paper of the federal parliament that day in June, 1956 a motion of censure with respect to Mr Speaker Beaudoin. In his speech to his own motion, Mr Drew made plain that Mr Beaudoin, for a variety of reasons, had lost the confidence of the House. Notwithstanding the fact that Prime Minister Louis St Laurent appeared to support and sustain Mr Speaker Beaudoin, at the end of the day the Speaker left the chair and left his office.

So I say, in summary, this is, in so far as our own situation, an unprecedented situation because, Mr Speaker, you sit in the Chair today but the permanent or principal occupant, Mr Speaker McLean, elected by this assembly a year ago, is not with us today because he's taking a medical leave, but it is clear, I think, to most people — and not just in the opposition caucuses but, I think to be fair, throughout the chamber as a chamber — that Mr Speaker McLean has lost a sufficient degree of confidence that I believe the question should be put, the vote taken, before we proceed to do the business of this assembly. And if I'm in the minority, and if Mr Speaker McLean is sustained by a majority of this House on a direct vote with respect to his confidence, then clearly he has, as Mr Speaker Anglin had 115 years ago, the right to carry on.

But his confidence is at issue. It must be put to the question, the vote must be taken, and I respectfully submit to you, Mr Speaker, that if you are to be relieved of the almost impossible situation in which you now find yourself, and if this chamber is to move forward to do the public's business, we ought to take that question and vote the matter as our first order of business today, and let us all be governed by whatever result that debate and that vote produces.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma on a related point of order.

Mr Wildman: I think it's important for all members of the House to understand the unprecedented legal position we are in as individuals and as members of the Legislative Assembly. We have advice from legal counsel for the Legislative Assembly that in view of the Speaker's lawyer's letter, we, as members of the Assembly, have the right to see the report, to debate the contents of the report from the independent investigator within this assembly, and we even, I understand his view is, could discuss the contents or the findings of the report among ourselves as members beyond this place. But the threat of legal action still remains that if personal matters dealt with for either of the people involved in this unfortunate affair become public, become matters of debate in the public domain, the Speaker could have grounds for legal action.

1610

In my view that is an untenable situation for myself as a member of this assembly, I think it's an untenable situation for all members of the assembly, and it is the Speaker and his legal counsel who have put us in that untenable situation. For that reason I believe he no longer enjoys the confidence of myself and my colleagues. I also believe we've got to deal with this immediately as the top priority.

I would go further and assert that in my view, to threaten members of the assembly with legal action for essentially doing what they are elected to do when they come here — it is quite conceivable that the legal counsel for the Speaker and the Speaker himself are in contempt of this assembly.

That's a very serious charge. I don't put it lightly. To have a situation where the person who occupies the chair of this assembly, who is responsible for protecting the rights of the assembly and the privileges of all members, might himself be in contempt of this assembly, I believe is an untenable situation. For that reason I believe we must deal with this and deal with it expeditiously.

This is not a happy situation, but I would plead with the government House leader and all members of the assembly to move on this matter and deal with the motion forthwith.

The Deputy Speaker: I think I would like to deal with that point of order first.

I would just like to go back through my job as I see it, and that is that you are the lawmakers of the province of Ontario and you have made the laws that this House goes by and you have empowered me to make sure that we go by the rules.

We are in motions now. I have no authority to change that. You wanted me to rule by it, and I will. It's up to

the government House leader to call orders of the day. I have no power to compel the government House leader to call any particular order, and we will conduct the chamber according to the rules that we have chosen for ourselves.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to raise a point of order with regard to the appropriateness of allowing this motion, exactly the point you're speaking to, given the fact that the government's best argument, from what I can determine, is that this vote should wait until Thursday because some members of at least his caucus need to see the report and determine what is in that report before they can decide how they feel about a vote of non-confidence.

I would suggest, with great respect to the government House leader, that he's on the shakiest ground of all by using that as the reason, given some of the comments that are in the public domain about due process and about how far along this process has gone and whether or not one would consider this to be a final finding or merely a first investigatory step.

I suggest that for the government House leader to say some members of the government caucus want to see that report so they can decide how they feel about confidence is not the fairest, and certainly is a serious denial of both players in this regard in terms of their rights, which is why, Speaker, you're hearing all of us make two points, two points that we're imploring you to use in your capacity as the interim Speaker of this Legislature.

The first is, we do not base our decision, certainly in our caucus, the NDP caucus, on the findings in that report or, for that matter, the findings at the end of the day with regard to all the allegations. That's not the issue for us. The issue for us is that the Speaker, whom I have respect for on a personal basis, but his conduct in this regard has brought such — quite frankly, I can't think of a better word, a softer word — disgrace to this House that I find it necessary to support a motion of non-confidence. That has nothing to do with the report. I've heard some of my colleagues in the Liberal Party stand in their place and make the same case as to how they feel and why they feel that way.

The second thing is that given the importance of choosing the Speaker — you use the term "as our Speaker," and in some sense, yes, sir, you are. But it has been the tradition in the last two Parliaments of this Legislature that we democratically elect our Speaker, and it's the first order of business. You, sir, were appointed by your caucus, as was the second Acting Speaker by the Liberals and the third Acting Speaker by us. That is why technically, without Mr Speaker McLean actively in the job, we don't have a Speaker, and therefore, you, sir, do not have the same responsibility as a duly elected Speaker to represent my interests.

That's not to say that you wouldn't be fair and that you wouldn't be evenhanded. But you do not enjoy the support of the majority of this House through a democratic vote. Given that that's the very first thing that we do when we meet as a Parliament, as a new legislative body, I think it makes a great deal of sense, and that's why I'm on my feet on this point of order, that you

should allow those of us who do not continue to support and have confidence in the current Speaker the right to express that democratic privilege that we have as members here on behalf of the people who sent us.

Further, it would seem to us that the government has a problem, and that's why it wants to move this to Thursday. I would think, listening to this unfold today, that's also why they want the report. They want something more than just lack of confidence because the reality is that the current Speaker, like yourself, is a member of the Tory party. So it's very difficult, and I can appreciate that. I wouldn't enjoy the prospect of voting against a member of my own party were they the one in the chair any more than I'm sure the current government members do. But this is not a social club. This is about enacting, as you have said yourself, Speaker, and ensuring that the laws of the land are in the best interests of the people. We have that privilege, that honour and that power.

So as difficult as it may be for the government members, I do not want to see my democratic rights run roughshod to give the government the breathing space it needs to get out of the political predicament it's in, because I suspect that right now, as the government House leader sits across the way and watches me speak, he's not entirely sure where his caucus would go on an open vote of confidence in the sitting Speaker, and I'm assuming it's an open vote.

Therefore, it would make sense that the best thing the government could do is: "Hey, let's buy some time. We've got to buy some time, because we've got to work our way through this thing." Quite frankly, a lot of the government members are damned if they do and damned if they don't. If they do support the current Speaker, then for those who have lost confidence — and that is shared in the public domain by those who agree — it will look like just a party hack kind of thing where they're supporting one of their own, democracy be damned; if they don't, then they've got to live with the fact that one of their own members was brought down by their hand because they have the majority control in the House.

In conclusion, I think those are two very good, legitimate points of order I ask you to consider when you stand up and continue to allow the government House leader to make this motion. I would ask you to consider them in a way that represents my rights as a member of the minority in this House, given that the chair you sit in is the only thing that stands in the way of a government majority running all over my rights.

I ask you to please reflect seriously, conscientiously, with a sense of tradition and a sense of the rights of all of us here, and by extension the people we represent, and do not allow this motion. Allow us the right to have this vote. If the majority sustains the Speaker, so be it, and if they don't, then we'll have an election. It's that simple, Speaker, and I ask you to stand behind that train of thought. Thank you, sir.

1620

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): I've listened very intently to the members opposite and heard their concerns and I appreciate the points of view they bring to the debate today.

I say to the member for Hamilton Centre that there was much concern on this side of the House as well. The decision is not one that I think members on this side would come to lightly; it is a concern to each and every one of us how we vote and represent the constituents we're elected to represent.

There are many privileges and rights in this place. There are the privileges and rights of the members of the opposition party. Having been in that situation, I understand the tenuousness of those rights and the power the government can have over the rights of the minority. But this has not been treated, on this side of the House, like the political issue that was summarized by the member for Hamilton Centre. It's a very concerning, deeply depressing moment for us to deal with, and we're having a great deal of difficulty resolving the issue in our minds.

We, today in caucus, discussed this at great length. There is, and I would put it to you very honourably, without any sense of politics at all, a significant number of members in our caucus who I believe would like to review that report. I think a great number of votes would hinge on how that report reads to them. It seems to me that many rights and privileges are sought in this place, and as a backbench member of this government — I don't want to speak for all — and as a person trying to be fair on this issue to all people involved, including yourselves, I think that allowing the two days for the members who would see this decision as the linchpin to how they would vote — I say to the member opposite "how they would vote" is a very real term — would allow them to come to a clear decision in their own minds.

I personally understand the points that have been made, Mr Speaker. I appeal to you and I thank our House leader today. We have had a very difficult time with this issue. We are not playing politics. This is a heartfelt concern. We ask for the two days. We ask for the time for those members to review the report and we take it as it is, because people's integrity on both sides of this issue hangs in the balance, both people who are involved. No one on this side of the House would stand in their place today and make the cavalier comment that this is simply a political hack or a political opportunity. This is causing as much concern over here, Mr Speaker, as it is causing concern over there.

Mr Curling: I've wrestled a long time with the thought in this point of order and the privileges I have in this House and why I was sent here. This is the reason why I think this point of order is very important to me.

The situation that is now being debated in this House is based on the fact too of the matter of due process. We have things in place to deal with these situations that we have before us, and one of the due process situations like this that has happened to our Speaker now is that the Human Rights Commission is in place to deal with that. Many of my constituents who have found themselves in situations like this have got to go through due process, and it takes them two or three years to do that. They've complained many times and, through me, have brought it to the House that the process is too long. Sometimes we talk about how justice delayed is justice denied.

What I have seen now is that we want to make a decision about an individual, the Speaker, the highest member of the House here. My confidence is no longer with this Speaker. It has nothing to do basically with the incident itself because the Human Rights Commission or whatever other courts will deal with that. But what has happened surrounding that has told me that I have lost all confidence in the way this individual has conducted himself with the House.

One wants to move on with other issues, great issues that concern my constituency and others. The privileges of my constituents are being denied because we cannot move on, because in the meantime we are setting up a new court in here that will deal with that issue and we must wait until that court comes with that decision. I really don't care what happens with that court because the fact is that there is a system and a process in place to deal with that. But what has happened in the process, as I have said, is that I've lost confidence in this individual. Why have I lost that? I've been threatened: "There is a report that's going to be distributed and if you dare speak about it, you'll be sued."

That tells me that is completely out of order. I would like to see you as the Chair, Mr Speaker, rule on that. How can someone tell me, in my privilege, that I will be sued if a report that has been made available to the committee — that we can't debate it in this House?

My point of order on this issue is not the action that has brought this about, which, as I said, can be dealt with through due process, either through the Human Rights Commission or through the courts, but that we should not be asked to give two days to deal with a report which I have no concern about — and, I have to be honest with you, I don't care about — because there is another process. If that's the case, all the others who find themselves in that situation will then have this court deal with it because within two or three months all their issues that have been brought forward, all those issues, can be done in a short time.

I had cases in the time when I was the critic for human rights, cases that had been brought forward where people had lost their jobs and had to step down, take a leave of absence. Some were found not guilty or guilty, and for some no decision had been made, but they had to wait two to three years. I think the precedent we are setting here is wrong. We cannot have one court for some people and another court for the others. In order for me to proceed with this kind of event, you must have a ruling that this be done with today.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to rule on that point of order in this way: I'd like to reiterate that the Speaker enforces the rules of the House. The rules of the House are that we are in routine motions. I don't suppose you would want to give me all the power and authority to make all of these decisions. Even if you did, I wouldn't. I am the Deputy Speaker. I will insist that the rules that you have set for yourselves you will obey. That is my job. That is my job only.

1630

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's exactly on that very point of the rules of procedure that I want to raise the point of order I have.

I think what is at the heart of the matter here today and the problem with the way in which the government House leader proposes to proceed, as if nothing had happened, business as usual, is that that, in and of itself, given the issue we have before us, is the problem.

We have in front of us a question of confidence in the Speaker of this House. It is an issue that many members have spoken about. I for one would add my voice to those who have said, "The actions of Speaker McLean to date are sufficient for me to have lost confidence in him." I appreciate that for some others there are other pieces of information they require in order for them to come to that conclusion. Being all fairminded people, we each will come to our decisions in our own way and through whatever kind of information we need to get.

I believe the question of the report is an important one. I would have thought that, as a legislator, it would have been appropriate for me and all 130 members of this Legislature to have been given a way to get access to that report, not necessarily to see the whole report but to know the essence of the findings of that report. Because that, in terms of the issue that was before the investigator, would have been appropriate for us as the collective employers of Speaker McLean and as the body to whom he is responsible and whose confidence he needs to have, as any Speaker needs to have, as being essential for him or any other Speaker to continue in the position of Speaker.

However, along that process a couple of other things happened in the way in which Speaker McLean conducted himself in dealing with accusations lodged against him that in my mind clearly showed that he chose to put protecting himself above protecting the institutions of the Parliament of Ontario, and that, to me, is fundamental. You cannot have a Speaker who chooses through legal actions and through other steps to protect his own self-interest first and foremost above the interests of the individual and collective legislators of this province. To me that's a point that is basic to the workings of this Legislature.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, I understand — I don't agree, but I understand — the view presented by the member for Etobicoke West in saying that he and others need to have more information before they can come to a decision. But I do say this, that I don't know how this Legislative Assembly can continue to function on a business-as-usual, even until Thursday, until this question is resolved.

So, Mr Speaker, the only thing I can offer — and I appreciate the position you're in, in trying to apply the rules as you see them and as they are written — I am asking you this, and I'm asking through you the government House leader, in suggesting that the only way out of this morass is indeed for this House to stand adjourned until Thursday and then for us to resume and deal at that point with the motion of non-confidence.

If there are members of this Legislative Assembly who feel they need more time to be able to garner whatever information they wish, then that, I suggest to you, sir, and I suggest to the government House leader, is the only way to reconcile the fact that for some of us the report is now irrelevant to the question of confidence with the

position that some others have taken that the report is substantially important to the decision that they will come to with respect to the confidence they have or don't have in the Speaker.

I think that's the only way we have at this juncture to reconcile those two very clearly established and expressed positions here among people who represent the constituents in this Legislative Assembly. I would put that to you, sir, as a suggestion in asking you to use the office that you occupy, albeit on a temporary basis, in suggesting that as a course of action to the government House leader, who I know in being present is also able to hear that and hopefully be able to respond in a positive manner to that suggestion as a way to get us out of this point and on with the proper business of this House.

The Deputy Speaker: I wouldn't want the member for Dovercourt or any other member to get the impression that I either agree or disagree with what you're saying. We are in an order of business according to the rules that you have made and that you have wanted me to enforce. We are in routine motions, and that's why I'm ruling on your point of order, because it seems to me that you are debating a motion that isn't before this House.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The government House leader has indicated that he does not wish to proceed until Thursday. We are, of course, back the first day and we find ourselves without a Speaker.

There is a way to proceed, and that is for the government House leader simply to table the report that many of us wish to see. He's quite right when he says there are some members who would like to see the report, study it and then make a decision. That is correct. But it is in his power today to simply say to you — and of course the suggestion was made by Mr Silipo that we could adjourn the House, and that could be simply done as well. But it is in his power simply to say: "Here is the report. I've put it in the public domain." Then of course the press would be interested to find out what's in the report. We can debate the report and then it has immunity. The press can quote what we are saying and consequently there would be no afterthought of having each one of us facing court action because of the threat of the Speaker.

So, Mr Speaker, if the government wants to go ahead and have a debate on this item, it can quite simply do so, not by seeking a confrontation which you are in the middle of — and we are somewhat sympathetic with you on this. Consequently, why don't you adjourn the House, recommend to the House leader to justify with the other leaders of our parties that the report can be tabled, and we can proceed without continuously finding ourselves in this morass, in this situation today?

The Deputy Speaker: On your point of order, I would like to suggest to you that you might have a good suggestion, and I wouldn't want to rule on that. I rule on points of order and I rule on the rules that you have made up, and the very rule that you are suggesting the Deputy Speaker take on this day violates the rules that you have given. It is not a point of order.

Mr Hampton: Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: I rise on standing order 21(a): "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of

the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act and other statutes, or by practice, precedent, usage and custom."

I'm asking you for a ruling, Speaker. I'm reading from Erskine May, Parliamentary Practice, 21st edition. Members of the Legislature and members of Parliament enjoy certain privileges. One of the privileges is freedom of speech. I would suggest to you that the actions taken by the Speaker and the Speaker's solicitor are a direct affront to the privileges of freedom of speech by members of this Legislature.

Mrs Caplan: In this House.

Mr Hampton: In this House.

One of the other privileges outlined by Erskine May is freedom from intimidation. In fact, Erskine May goes on — and I want to read this to you, Speaker, because I want a ruling from you on this — Erskine May goes on to discuss contempt. It says, in dealing with contempt, "Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt...." That's on page 115 of Erskine May, chapter 9.

Speaker, I want you to reflect on what has happened here today, because I would suggest to you that what has been shown is contempt for this Legislature and contempt for the privileges of every member of this Legislature by Speaker McLean.

The first part of it, Speaker, simply says that we all have a privilege against being obstructed or intimidated in our work. I would say to you that one part of our work here is to be able to decide how we shall be dealt with to see the rules of this House enforced. But in fact what has happened is we have a Speaker who, as I understand it, contacted the Board of Internal Economy and the House leaders and indicated to them that if they attempted to deal with matters, if they attempted to communicate the report, they would be sued.

I would put it to you, Speaker, that what has been shown is contempt for this Legislature, a contempt which goes to the very integrity, the very core of this Legislature. I would ask for a ruling from you, Speaker, because I believe the privileges of all members of this House have been infringed upon and I believe contempt has been shown for this Legislature. I want a ruling from you.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Rainy River has requested a ruling on privilege. The members should be aware that privilege is a tenet of the work of this —

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I sincerely raised the issue of contempt.

The Deputy Speaker: I will seek a ruling on privilege. If you will give me 10 minutes in recess, I'll do so.

The House recessed from 1644 to 1656.

The Deputy Speaker: Part of your privilege as a member is undoubtedly a right to unfettered free speech in this House. Let me repeat, for emphasis, "in this House."

If a member were to make comments in this House about the report in question and, subsequent to those comments, a legal action was commenced, this would

unquestionably constitute contempt of this House. In giving this ruling, I must caution the House that this situation has not yet arisen.

Therefore, I rule that there does not exist today a *prima facie* case of privilege, nor a contempt of Parliament.

Interjection: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Debate?

Mrs Caplan: Mr Speaker, if I could, I would like to speak to —

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to bring this to a conclusion. I want to know why you're standing.

Mrs Caplan: I would like to, if I could, present some evidence so that you —

The Deputy Speaker: No. I want to know why the member has arisen.

Mrs Caplan: I have a point of privilege.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. I'd like to hear your point of privilege.

Mrs Caplan: As I said earlier in the day, I received a letter from the lawyer for Speaker McLean, which I'm prepared to table with this House. In this letter — and I will read it for you, Mr Speaker, because I believe the ruling you just made may not have considered the last sentence in this letter. It's addressed to me, Mrs Caplan, re file number 11230.

"Newspaper reports suggest that the investigator's report will be delivered to you and then released to the leaders of the various political parties.

"I enclose a copy of my letter to Mr Hayter.

"Please read," underlined, "the policy, a copy of which I enclose.

"Please read sections 8.6.3.1, 8.6.3.3, 8.6.4.1 and 8.6.6.4.

"In my opinion, you should refuse to receive a copy of the investigator's report as its delivery to you is a breach of the policy. If you receive it, you must keep it confidential.

"Any breach will result in an action for damages."

Clearly, Mr Speaker, this is threatening. Just the statement that says, "Any breach will result in an action for damages" — when I read this, I felt intimidated, I felt threatened and I felt that it didn't matter where there was a discussion of this report, be it in this House or be it outside this House. The fact that I was threatened with legal action should there be any breach of confidentiality, as seen by the lawyer for Speaker McLean, said to me, and this is what I said earlier in the day, that the Speaker of this House, Speaker McLean, authorized this letter and clearly understood the intent of this letter. As Speaker of this House he would know that members of this House have the right and the privilege to speak unfettered in this House about matters rightly before this House.

The fact that I understand from the government House leader that there is yet another opinion, which would suggest that members can receive the report and debate the report freely in this House, suggests to me that I was correct in my interpretation of this letter and that it was an attempt by Speaker McLean to intimidate me.

The fact that I interpreted it that way, that my colleague Mr Wildman thus refused the report because he was intimidated by the threats contained in this letter, would suggest that in fact there has been a contempt of

this House, that members have felt intimidated and that you should reconsider your ruling on the basis of this letter, which is clear in its intent. That intent is to stifle members, even in this House, from speaking. That is the point; that is the issue.

For any member who believes that in order to make a judgement they must read the report, I suggest to them that no member of this House knows better than the Speaker of this House the rights and the privileges of members to feel that they can freely speak. For Speaker McLean to permit his lawyer to send a letter that says, "Any breach will result in an action for damages," is contempt of this Legislature.

I believe you are in a very difficult situation. But having agreed to rule on the issue of privilege — which I did not ask you to do earlier today — I believe that if you are going to rule on this, you must rule that Speaker McLean has shown contempt for this House, because indeed this letter is proof that he has.

Now, I attempted earlier, while you were about to make your ruling, to bring you a copy of this letter. I am prepared to table it in this Legislature and ask that you reconsider your ruling in light of a letter which is very, very clear. When I received it, I felt that it was improper. It was not only bad judgement, but it was contrary to the rules of this Legislature.

I believe, from my own experience and my reaction to this letter and the reaction of other members of the Legislature, that this is all the evidence that should be required of the Speaker's inability to maintain a just and fair environment in this House, because I believe, by virtue of this letter, that he has shown contempt for this House.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to point out to the member for Oriole that this House was aware of that letter when I made my ruling.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Elgin on a point of order.

Mr Peter North (Elgin): Mr Speaker, as you would know, I perhaps more than most members of the Legislature depend on the Speaker, for a number of different reasons. Earlier today, many of the members who spoke referred to a decision and they referred to it in the context of the three parties, the three caucuses. In light of that, I would ask that any information or material that could be shared or would be shared would be considered to be shared with me as well.

I am concerned, as Speaker McLean is a friend of mine as well. I want to say that it seems somewhat ironic to me that the government of the day and the members of the government, perhaps members of this side as well, would feel so fairminded and strike such a balance that Speaker McLean himself doesn't wish to have brought to light; I mean, he doesn't himself want to strike that balance. He doesn't himself, by virtue of the fact that the member for Oriole has just shown you, want to bring an opportunity for all members to view this issue with some balance.

I think it's important that we do look at all avenues and all angles of this issue, but it is, I must say, extremely ironic. If Speaker McLean doesn't want us to look at this report in balance to make our decision, then perhaps we should move on and make our decision.

I must say that it is another concern that I have and I must bring to your attention that I think it is fair to say that we should look at the optics of this House making such a decision based on this particular document. I believe that it in some ways may have some bearing on some outcome that could come later on in some form of litigation or some decision that could be made down the road. I think that should be borne in mind as well, because I think it's important. There is a certain optics when this particular Legislature and the members in it make a decision based on information that they're provided with. That could have a profound effect on either Speaker McLean or the complainant in this particular situation.

The last comment I'll make is that you have said on a number of occasions this afternoon in this Legislature that you are not able to rule on points of order. I am curious to understand how it is that the Speaker of this Legislature at —

Failure of sound system.

Mr North: — as a member in this Legislature. I depend on you, Mr Speaker, to put forth —

Failure of sound system.

Mr North: I ask you if you can explain to me how it is that you are — I'm not judging you, Speaker, and I want you to understand that. But sitting as Speaker of the Legislature, you have said on a number of occasions today that you cannot make a ruling on a point of order. If you can explain that to me, sir —

Failure of sound system.

Mr North: — take through you to the government House leader the points that I've made as information.

The Deputy Speaker: On your point of order, it is not a point of order. If I've given you the impression that I can't or won't rule on a point of order, then my apologies. I found that they were not points of order.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): Mr Speaker, I would rise on a point of order and ask for the Speaker's ruling as to what the House leader has proposed, which is indeed constituting this House as a committee of the whole to rule on an alleged instance of sexual harassment. I know of no precedent, no basis under which we can do that, and yet what the House leader has suggested to this body is that we would, in effect, by reading a report that is part of that proceeding, do that.

When we look at the rules of debate which you need to apply, there is a prohibition against members who would speak to anything that is under a quasi-judicial ruling. We need to know what form of process this will be that the House leader has suggested as appropriate for the days to follow. We need a ruling from the Speaker in order to know whether that will be an appropriate discussion.

The Deputy Speaker: To the member for Elgin, I may have neglected to include that he has remedies to his suggestions.

I do not find that you have a point of order.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Please, I appreciate that this has been discussed quite well by any number of members of the assembly. Today you are, as Deputy Speaker, fulfilling the role of Speaker. There's no issue, no quarrel with

that. Mr McLean has absented himself from the assembly. As Speaker, you've outlined that you have some very distinct and clear roles. The maintenance of order is one of them, and all of us understand that. When we sit and listen to the member for Oriole read into the record a letter that she received — I appreciate that you've ruled on her point of privilege. It's been acknowledged and I think it's common ground here that when counsel speaks for his or her client it's as if that client were speaking.

1710

Look at what's happened here. Mr McLean, through his lawyer, has effectively announced that at least in so far as Mr McLean is concerned there is no longer such thing as immunity of the House. The letter from lawyer Teplitsky to Ms Caplan and to others in this assembly says that, and again it's as if Speaker McLean himself were uttering this, "Discussion of the contents of a report which you may receive" — to wit the Swinton report — "anywhere, any time, will result in us initiating legal action seeking a remedy," seeking damages.

That's a very bold proposition because it displays either an ignorance — I don't think it's an ignorance of the long-held tradition of House immunity. It's either an ignorance of the law and the rule or it's a bold-faced contempt for that long-standing rule. It's in effect a Speaker of this Legislature saying to the members of the assembly that the Speaker of this Legislature no longer recognizes the long-held, historic rule of House immunity. I suggest to you, sir, that in itself is contemptuous.

The Speaker, in his ruling on the member for Oriole's question of privilege, said, "Well, the contempt can only be raised after the misconduct that constitutes the contempt has occurred." That's my understanding of your ruling, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The member does not have a point of order.

Interjections.

Mr Pouliot: I feel that it has been a difficult day for you. Permettez-moi de me joindre à mes nombreux collègues du Parti libéral puis de l'opposition officielle, à mes collègues de mon parti, le Nouveau Parti démocratique.

À la une ces gens ont demandé que vous, bien sûr intérimaire dans votre capacité, portez jugement sur un incident, sur le fait suivant qui s'est produit : à travers les services de son avocat le président actuel, résidant, de la Chambre, M. McLean, a tenté de façon systématique, de façon délibéré de menotter, de déposer un état de silence sur les membres de l'Assemblée législative, déposer un régime d'interdiction, empêcher le débat, bousculer les gens, les menacer, menacer leur état financier, menacer leur droit de représenter, chacune et chacun, leur côté. C'est à vous. C'est votre responsabilité. Je vous remercie.

The Deputy Speaker: On your point of order, I have ruled on privilege; it would seem to me, from the debate I hear, that you are arguing privilege and rising on a point of order. We are in routine motions, and if there is something that is delaying the House, there is a rule —

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Pardon me — there's a rule that I can rule on.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to warn the member for Lake Nipigon to come to order.

We are in routine motions. My ruling is that it's not a point of order. You are arguing a privilege. It's not a point of order.

Mr Bisson: On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I rise as order 21(a) says clearly: "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act and other statutes...."

I hear where you came back into the House just shortly a little while ago and said basically that your ruling was in effect that so long as the Speaker had not acted out on his threat to pursue this matter in the courts in suing one of the members of this assembly, he would not be in contempt until such an action would take place, is what you said. I repeat: If the Speaker of the House did not sue us or just threatened us, there was nothing you can do, but if he actually did sue us, he would be in contempt.

I say to you, Mr Speaker, this is interesting because that would be tantamount to my going into a court and saying to the judge, "I threaten you," with whatever actions I deemed as a citizen that I want to take against that judge. I would be ruled in contempt if I were to be in that position.

So I ask you, Mr Speaker, with regard to the point of privilege that I rise on, I find myself, and I think the rest of the members of the Legislative Assembly find themselves, in a bit of a strange situation with what you have ruled on coming back into this House. In effect, you have said, so long as the Speaker doesn't act on his threat, he can threaten us as much as he wants, but there's nothing we can do about it. That's basically what you're saying.

I am saying as a member of this House on the point of privilege: No, the Speaker of the House cannot threaten the members of the assembly with actions against those members for dealing with the matter. It would be tantamount to my going to court and saying to the judge, "I threaten you," with whatever action and I don't want the judge doing his job. The judge, he or she, would immediately rule me in contempt of that court and would either throw me in jail — I think that's probably what would happen immediately.

I would also say on the point of privilege that if a member of the public were to come before a standing committee of this House and were to say to the members of the House, "I threaten you," with whatever action, as members of this assembly, that member of the public would be put in contempt of the Legislature and of that committee.

So I say to you, Mr Speaker, quite frankly I think by your own ruling you are basically saying what I think the members of the opposition are saying, which is the Speaker is in contempt of this House by the actions of his letter and by his subsequent actions and how he's dealing with this. I say to you, Mr Speaker, you should go back and you should think about this carefully and you should come back and rule, because the Speaker is in contempt by his very actions.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to thank the member for Cochrane South. I gave a ruling on the point

of privilege. I haven't heard anything that would change my decision on that and I have not heard anything new on privilege.

Debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Rainy River. Would the member please tell me why he's on his feet?

Mr Hampton: I'm raising a point of privilege. It is a different issue than I raised before. I raised with you before the issue of contempt. I want to again refer to Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, 21st edition, page 126. This has to do with the issue of intimidation. I want to point out to you this citation: "Members and others have been punished" for "threatening a member with the possibility of a trial at some future time for a question asked in the House...." The reference here is the report of the committee of privileges, House of Commons, 284, 1959-60. This is a specific example, Speaker, where someone threatened future court action against a member of the Legislature for asking a particular question in the House. That was held to be intimidation.

1720

I'm asking you, Speaker, what we have here is a threat by the Speaker, very clearly — you've heard the words, the written words — to bring future court action if any member of the Legislature attempts to discuss or otherwise deal with this matter. I respectfully submit to you, Speaker, that just as the House of Commons ruled on this in 1959-60, we have in this case a situation of intimidation, intimidation which breaches the privileges of all the members of this Legislature, and I would ask you for a ruling on that point.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to address the ruling to the member for Rainy River, and that is that I have ruled on the privilege. I haven't heard anything that changes my mind.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, with due respect, when I spoke on my previous point of privilege it was with respect to the privilege of free speech. This is with respect to the privilege of freedom from intimidation. I have given you a specific cite from the House of Commons which I think, if not exactly on point, is very close to being on point, and it was found to be intimidation within the House of Commons.

Mr Kormos: Mr Speaker, further to —

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair would like to recognize the member for Welland-Thorold if he knew why he was standing.

Mr Kormos: Further to that point raised by my colleague the leader of the third party —

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me. In this order of business there are three ways in which you might get the attention or the reflection of the House. One is on a point of order, one might be a point of privilege and the other is debate. The Chair has to know why you are on your feet.

Mr Kormos: Speaker, please. Further to that point means further to that point of privilege, which is what I stand on now.

The Deputy Speaker: No. I would like the member to tell me why he is on his feet.

Mr Kormos: I'll stand on a point of order, Speaker. Chair, we're ad idem now.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Welland-Thorold on a point of order.

Mr Kormos: Further to that point of privilege, this is what the point of order is all about, in that the leader of the third party stood on a point of privilege and raised a unique and separate issue from the point of privilege that had been raised earlier.

I understand the Speaker is under pressure today. I understand that. All of us do. I understand the Speaker realizes that the press gallery's eyes are on him and that this is his 15 minutes of Warholian fame. But at the same time we're talking about something here so serious that it warrants the most thorough consideration.

The leader of the third party raised the issue of intimidation, which is distinct and separate from the issue of contempt that was spoken of to the Speaker in his earlier point of privilege. Again, I understand the Speaker's eagerness to want to move these things along. This is part of the problem. Mr Hampton now raises an issue with clear precedent from the federal House of Commons. The Speaker ought to be adjourning for a brief 10 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is warning the member for Welland-Thorold to come to order. I am interrupting your point of order because I have to understand the difference between what I'm hearing from you as a point of order and what I understand is a questioning of the ruling of the Chair.

Mr Kormos: The problem is that when you responded to the leader of the third party on his point of privilege, you didn't address his point of privilege; you reiterated what you had said on an earlier —

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Welland-Thorold come to order. I understand. Questioning the ruling of the Chair is not a point of order.

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, a discrete and different point of order: I'm sure you must find this difficult as we see the hours this afternoon while away and we see ourselves unable to conduct business appropriate to the province of Ontario, business of interest to the public of Ontario, because of a stalemate with respect to the motion of non-confidence in the Speaker and when that will be dealt with.

I would like you to rule on the issue of whether or not the government House leader's motion that he has put forward with respect to private members' business on Thursday morning is in order at this time, and I'd like to explain to you why. First of all, under section 14 of the rules you have a duty and a responsibility to advise the House when a motion is out of order. You do that when you find that the motion "is contrary to the rules and privileges of Parliament." I want to address this with respect to both the rules and the privileges. I want to come at it from two aspects.

It is obvious, I think, to all of us here that the rules of the Legislature as they are currently set out do not adequately anticipate the events that face us at this time. So I understand the difficulty you and the table officers are in with respect to how to give us guidance on how to proceed through this. But if I may make this point to you, the job of a Chair is to facilitate the running of business, is to facilitate the members of this Legislature being able, within their rights and privileges, to conduct the business

of the province. There are times when events or circumstances will arise that the rules don't foresee. Those are the times — I have not made my point, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to rule on your point.

Ms Lankin: I haven't made it yet.

The Deputy Speaker: The point of order is whether or not the motion put forward by the House leader a few hours ago is in order, and that is not a point of order.

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, you have not listened to the reasons.

1730

The Deputy Speaker: It's been a long afternoon — my first. I would like to be indulgent and tolerant, and I may be for another minute or two. Would the member for Beaches-Woodbine make a point of order.

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, I gave the citation with respect to your responsibility to advise the House whether or not a motion is in order. So I am clearly raising a point of order. You have a ruling to make on that. You would not like to hear my reasons? You don't want to hear the reasons why I'm putting a point of order, Mr Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Beaches-Woodbine please come to order.

Ms Lankin: I'll come to order, Mr Speaker, but you're going to have this whole place blow up if you don't control the way —

Mr Pouliot: Don't play games. Line up your ducks.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: It's been a long afternoon. Order.

Mr Pouliot: Line up your ducks. We've got more than —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I am naming the member for Nipigon.

Mr Pouliot: I've come here to work, Norm.

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Nipigon please withdraw.

Mr Pouliot: Mr Speaker, with the highest of respect to you and for all the good deeds out there, I will indeed withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: There may have been some misunderstanding by the member for Nipigon. I'd warned him earlier and I had named him. Maybe I didn't speak loudly enough. You may have thought I asked you to withdraw a comment; I asked you to withdraw from the chamber.

Mr Pouliot left the chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to rule on the point of order raised by the member for Beaches-Woodbine. My ruling is that I don't have to listen to all of the reasons for why you want to make a point of order. I just want to know if it is, not all the reasons why it should be.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): Mr Speaker, I now move that you put the motion.

Mr Bisson: On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: There's been no debate.

The Deputy Speaker: We'll take a minute.

Mr Bisson: There's been no debate on the motion. Come on, Norm. On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: There's been no debate. How can he move forward?

The Deputy Speaker: The ruling of the Chair is that that motion is not in order.

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, on a point of privilege: I am a little bit amazed at the method of ejecting the member for Nipigon, but anyway, there's a point I want to make on a point of privilege, if you would allow me about two minutes; it will be fairly quick. In Beauchesne's Rules and Forms, it says: "The privilege of freedom of speech is both the least questioned and the most fundamental right of the member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committee." It is guaranteed by the British Bill of Rights and is a guarantee of our Parliament.

If you go on to point 99 within the same document, the Parliamentary Rules and Forms — Mr Speaker, I want you to listen, because I'm going to ask you to rule on this — it says: "Direct threats which attempt to influence members' actions in the House are undoubtedly breaches of privilege."

The point I make to the Speaker is that it seems to me that Speaker McLean, in the particular actions he has taken in regard to this matter, has threatened the members of this House. The parliamentary rules under Beauchesne are fairly clear: It says you're not allowed to do that. I would ask the Speaker — in this case you, the Deputy Speaker — to rule on that matter. Take 10 minutes if you need to, and come back and tell us if indeed Speaker McLean has threatened the members of this House and if indeed he is in contempt of this House.

The Deputy Speaker: I've ruled on that point of privilege previously. The chair recognizes the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, we're moving to debate on the motion? Well, if I may indicate and remind people, the subject matter of the motion is with respect to private members' business and orders of the House with respect to what private member ballot items are coming forward in what order — routine business of the House, routine business.

I guess the point that many of us have been trying to make is that there is nothing routine about the circumstance we face in this Legislature today. There is nothing routine about a circumstance where a number, if not the majority — we don't know because it has not been tested in a democratic vote yet — where a number of members of the Legislative Assembly have indicated a lack of

confidence in the Speaker, where a motion has been put forward, has been filed appropriately, with due notice given, and where the government of the day is prohibiting debate, prohibiting it from coming forward.

Had I had an opportunity to give you reasons for the point of order, which you wouldn't allow me to, I might have pointed out some sections to you in which you can see that the election of the Speaker of the House is given precedent over all other matters. It is not routine business. Surely, even though the rules don't contemplate the circumstance we find ourselves in, surely it is common sense to understand that when a very serious motion is put that says there is a lack of confidence in the Speaker of the House, that matter should take precedence over a motion of routine business with respect to private members' hour on Thursday morning.

I feel very strongly that this is a matter that the government House leader must reflect upon and that the Deputy Speaker who is now in the chair and the table officers must reflect on, because we are in a situation where the government can forestall forever the ability of members of this Legislature to have dealt with appropriately and in democratic fashion a motion of lack of confidence in the Speaker. That cannot be what has been envisioned by the priority of election of Speaker, by the priority of protection of rights of members. Therefore, I think people need time to think about this and I'd like to move an adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): The member for Beaches-Woodbine moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1742 to 1811.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Beaches-Woodbine has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 24; the nays are 56.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1812.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Lines:
94B	3996	1	21-23

Delete and replace with the following:

Hon Mr Sterling: Agreed.

The Speaker: Agreed.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Allan K. McLean

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Samia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	
McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
Stockwell, Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	Ind	
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation

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Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 25 September 1996

Mercredi 25 septembre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 September 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 septembre 1996

*The House met at 1334.
Prayers.*

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I would like to inform the members that the Clerk of the House has received a letter from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Allan K. McLean, which I would ask him to read to the House.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):

"September 25, 1996

"Mr Claude DesRosiers

"Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

"Room 104

"Legislative Building

"Toronto, Ontario

"M7A 1A2

"Dear Mr DesRosiers:

"Today, I have requested the Clerk, Mr Claude DesRosiers, to convey my alarm and concern for the wellbeing of my colleagues on both sides of the House. They collectively represent the wishes of the people of Ontario and they should not be prevented nor distracted from carrying out their duties.

"Unfortunately, the allegations made against my person are still far from reaching a proper hearing. I am convinced, after this matter has received proper arbitration, the presumption of wrongdoing will have been eliminated.

"Because of my deep respect for the responsibilities of the office I hold and the absolute necessity that the affairs of the Legislature not be delayed, I have reluctantly concluded my resignation is the only reasonable alternative.

"I regret to inform the members of the provincial Legislature of my decision to step down as your Speaker. My resignation becomes effective Thursday, September 26, 1996.

"Sincerely

"Al McLean

"Speaker

"Ontario Legislature."

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Contrary to what the Minister of Northern Development and Mines said on Focus Ontario, Sudburians and northerners do not want a ribbon-cutting minister who hands out \$100 cheques.

Minister, what we need is for this government to give us a health services restructuring plan that meets the needs of Sudburians and northeastern Ontarians, not the Thunder Bay blunt-axe approach.

We need the province to share in the funding for the Centre for Life project. We need funding for the regional cancer centres throughout northern Ontario. We need funding for the simulator for Science North. We need the northern support grant to be entrenched in provincial legislation.

We need a minister who relocates his deputy minister to Sudbury to operate this northern ministry out of the north by a northerner. We need a minister who protects and fights for Sudburians and northerners around the cabinet table. We need a minister who knows that Sudbury isn't a town, as he referred to it on Focus Ontario, that it was incorporated in 1930 and became a part of the region in 1973.

Keep your ribbon-cutting ceremonies, Mr Minister. Keep your \$100 cheques. Give Sudburians and northerners what we need, what we deserve and what we're paying for.

Give us a minister who knows and cares about the north. Give us a minister who is a leader, not a follower. Give us a minister who is a voice for the north. Give us a minister who will fight for fair representation for northern Ontario within the newly defined Tory Ontario. Give us hope.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): The family support plan is in crisis and the Attorney General and the minister responsible for women's issues should admit it.

As a direct result of this Conservative government's decision to close eight regional FSP offices and lay off 290 staff, women and children who did receive support payments on a regular basis are now not. The problem is not long-standing, nor is it the fault of a computer. The fact that families are not receiving moneys they are legally entitled to has everything to do with the conscious decision made by the Attorney General to finance the tax cut on the backs of these women and children.

There are now 50 FSP cases in my office. Beginning on August 20, we faxed inquiries on these to Michael Pengelly, MPP contact in the minister's office, at his request. Of the 18 inquiries sent to him, we never received one response. On September 6, we were told by the director of FSP to fax inquiries to FSP directly. Since then, we've received eight responses and still have 42 constituents on whose behalf we can't get an answer.

If the Attorney General was truly concerned with finding a positive solution to the crisis that he's created,

he'd do the following: Firstly, he'd reopen the eight regional FSP offices and restore the direct access women and children had to FSP staff; secondly, he'd rehire the 290 staff he laid off who had the knowledge and experience to deal with these cases; and finally, he'd admit that it's his fault, and no one else's, that women and children who were receiving cheques on a regular basis are now not.

1340

RENFREW VICTORIA HOSPITAL

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): The Renfrew Victoria Hospital will serve as one of only 13 sites chosen by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation to participate in the national performance indicator project. In this pilot, Renfrew Victoria Hospital will help establish methods of developing and monitoring standards for hospitals. They will do this by evaluating six generic quality indicators.

Where quality is concerned, the Renfrew Victoria Hospital has earned its stripes. It was awarded a four-year accreditation by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, something only three rural hospitals in Canada have managed to accomplish.

In another rare feat, Renfrew Victoria was recognized by the Canadian College of Health Service Executives and 3M Canada for significant achievement in the delivery of health care. Thanks to the haemodialysis team, which has received strong support from our Ministry of Health, Renfrew was the first rural hospital to every receive that accolade.

The fact that we have one of the best acute care hospitals is due in no small part to Renfrew Victoria's executive director, Randy Penney, and the health care professionals who have worked to establish standards of service. I congratulate them all.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): We all know that northern Ontario is about to face even a smaller number of MPPs. The number of MPPs in northern Ontario will yet be reduced. I have a copy of what Mr Harris called A Voice for the North, where he indicated a number of things that he was going to do for northern Ontario. But not anywhere in that document can I find that he was going to reduce the northerners' voice at Queen's Park.

The number one issue raised as I travelled the riding over the summer was that of unemployment in northern Ontario, which has reached 10.6%. Northerners are looking to this government to provide some leadership, something we've seen lacking in northern Ontario since this government took power over a year ago. Instead of Premier Harris reducing the northern representation here at Queen's Park, which he is planning to do, we are looking for him to deal with problems in the areas where we are affected in the north, in terms of health care, education, natural resources and the environment. We want to know what his plans are to reduce the unemployment rate. We want to see results from his commitment, the commitment he gave northerners during the last campaign.

Mr Premier, northern Ontario does have the potential to be one of the most prosperous regions in Canada and we are looking to you to ensure that we get what we deserve in northern Ontario for that to happen.

NIAGARA DETENTION CENTRE

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): The recent announcement of this government to build its superjails is the most foolhardy venture we've heard of yet. Mark my words, at the end of the day it's going to mean higher costs for taxpayers in this province. It's going to mean putting prisoners and inmates and workers in those correctional centres, correctional officers, at risk. There is going to be bloodshed as a result of this proposal.

It's not about saving money; it's about this government's obsession with Toronto and its complete ignorance about the realities of Ontario outside the city of Toronto. Nothing could be more illustrative than its proposal to shut down the Niagara Detention Centre, one of the newest detention centres in the province and one of the most efficient. The Niagara Detention Centre, which services the two judicial districts in Niagara region, Niagara North and Niagara South, at a cost of \$88 per day per offender, among the most efficient in the province, among the newest, among the most modern and best staffed, is scheduled to be shut down and turned into some sort of warehousing the upkeep of which no municipality down there can afford to take up.

This government doesn't understand that the Niagara Detention Centre provides community-based rehabilitation and counselling and support for the inmates and prisoners being detained there. This government has lumped the Niagara Detention Centre in with a number of facilities which may well require addressing, but which have nothing in common with the NDC. I am calling upon the four Tory members, along with my colleague from St Catharines, Mr Bradley, to join me in persuading this minister that he's wrong — dead wrong — and he's going to have a price to pay.

SCARBOROUGH ITALFEST

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): I would like to extend my congratulations to the Italian community in Scarborough for hosting its fifth annual Scarborough Italfest. The 1996 Italfest also coincides with the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Centre's 40th birthday and the city of Scarborough's 200th anniversary. I would like to extend my congratulations and best wishes to them all.

The Italian community in Scarborough has worked hard to put together another full schedule of activities. I would like to recognize their efforts and wish them much success as this week's events unfold.

Italian residents in Scarborough are an important part of our community. They, along with many other immigrants, make up our very diverse Scarborough community. All of these ethnic groups contribute through their art, culture and food to the diversity of the city and our everyday lives. This Italian festival in particular gives the entire Scarborough community an opportunity to experience them as people, artists and athletes.

Immigrants to the province of Ontario are one of the most valuable resources. I come from a family of immigrants. My wife is an immigrant, and so was my father. I would like to extend my thanks to all of the immigrants of Ontario, especially those of Italian heritage who reside in Scarborough and whose tremendous efforts make the Scarborough Italfest as popular as it is.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): May I begin today with a question to the House: Is there anyone in the House who is not aware of the significant doctor shortage in Windsor? You absolutely must be, because it's been going on for months now.

We have a particular problem with obstetrics. We are having a great deal of difficulty finding OBs for women who are having babies. This is a very serious problem. I understand that the minister cannot have a baby. I do expect the women in the Tory caucus to make their Minister of Health aware of how significant an issue this is. We have women who are at risk — heart problems; now they're having babies. These women need prenatal care and we're having a terrible time organizing OBs for these women.

Let me tell you that we have now turned to our American friends to see if they can somehow take our patients on. Is the minister prepared to deal with this? Apparently so. Does he realize that women, Canadians with landed immigrant status, need to access a visitor's visa in order to go across the border to deliver a baby? Is he aware that once the babies are born — are they Americans? Are they Canadians? The US immigration officials do not want to hear from us, because I can tell you it is simply going to be a wrangled mess. Let me tell you the difficulty in having these babies obtain OHIP numbers once they're born over there, again something that will take months. And who is going to pick up all the various costs associated with these delays?

Apparently, the minister is prepared to pay US\$6,000 to have a baby delivered there, compared to our \$1,200. He's also prepared to pay \$12,000 if it happens to be a C-section.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired.

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I see that the new Minister of the Environment is in the House today. I want to welcome him to his new position and let him know that he can count on the support of the NDP caucus should he take any actions that actually improve Ontario's environmental protection.

After hearing the former minister go on about how she wasn't going to do anything about vehicle emissions and smog because people wanted government out of their face, we now hear some positive rumblings from the new minister about vehicle emissions testing. We'll need to wait and see what kind of shape the program takes, but I can assure the minister that we expect action.

I'll say this: No one with any concern for our environment will spend any time bemoaning the loss of the last

minister, whose record for decimating environmental protection is without parallel. But only a fool would believe that is the reason the Premier replaced her. Let's be frank. The Premier put the new minister in place in the mistaken belief that he can do a better job of defending this government's environmental agenda, which as far as I and an increasing number of Ontarians can tell, consists purely of appeasing their big business friends.

I believe the reason the previous minister had such a hard time defending the government record is because the record is indefensible. If the role of the new minister doesn't involve some positive action and continues to be to carry out the agenda of the Premier's office to destroy what protective framework we have left, let me assure the minister that he will have every bit as tough a time as the last one. That's a promise, Norm.

1350

PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I am very happy to tell everyone in the House about some very exciting developments that took place in Sarnia over the summer. Despite being a major player in the Ontario economy and the petrochemical centre of Canada, with five refineries and 17 chemical plants in the Chemical Valley, we have experienced many years of downsizing. But that's changing somewhat. Now construction and chemical industry employees have something to cheer about.

Nova Chemicals and Bayer, two world-class petrochemical companies, have shown their confidence in the Sarnia area by launching major expansions. Nova has begun a \$25-million expansion leading to more ethylene production, and Bayer is constructing two new production units worth \$15 million; these will produce 2,000 tonnes of nickel hydroxide and 1,200 tonnes of tungsten carbide per year.

This means jobs, increased prosperity and the real hope of further expansion and investment in this important industry in Ontario and in my riding. This means a better future for Ontario and for the families in the Sarnia area. I couldn't be happier than that.

ORAL QUESTIONS

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the minister who is responsible for creating an obstetrical crisis in the province of Ontario. Minister, in the past few months, 1,365 expectant mothers, many of whom are classified as high-risk pregnancies, have been forced to call the emergency number of the College of Physicians and Surgeons because they could not find a local doctor willing to deliver their babies — 1,365 pregnant women, Minister, who are anxious and fearful because they can't find a doctor, and that number is growing literally every hour. Something that is supposed to be a blessed event is turning into a nightmare in the lives of these women.

Minister, I ask you today, where have you been and what have you been doing while this crisis is building?

How is it possible that you didn't even get around to appointing a negotiating team until yesterday?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for the question on behalf of the women and children of this province. We're very concerned about this situation, and this government took the only action that's been taken in the last 10 years on the fee schedule when we gave obstetricians a 30% raise on April 1. Today, obstetricians in this province, if they do an average of 165 births per year, which is the average, are \$14,000 per obstetrician better off than they were when this government took office a year ago, and we have the highest-paid in Canada. So we're doing everything we can on the money side. I can't think of any other group out there in any sector that's received a raise in the last year, especially a significant raise to that extent.

Second, delivery of births, whether done by obstetricians or any other physician in this province, is exempt from the threshold. You would think, if you wanted to make more money, you would actually double up the number of births you were doing; they're exempt from any threshold, which is much different than the thresholds and caps that exist in other provinces.

I must admit that I understand the frustration of many of the physicians, who have been frustrated for 10 to 15 years in this province, over three governments. I do not understand the obstetricians' frustration and why they're threatening to withdraw services in this province. I fully admit that given that we have addressed the fact that they were historically underpaid — we raised their pay for a delivery based on a 10-year-old OMA report that we acted on in April — and yet we still seem to find disgruntled obstetricians in this province. I'm doing everything I can. If the honourable member has further suggestions, I'd be happy to hear them.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, I don't think you can bully doctors into delivering babies. We have a crisis for 1,365 pregnant women, at last count, who don't know who is going to deliver their babies and their deliveries are imminent.

There have been two constants about your handling of this crisis. The first constant is that you tend to give your reassurance that everything's going to be okay. The difference with your answer just now is that I didn't even hear that reassurance to the women who are out there. The second is that the list of pregnant women who don't know where they're going to get their babies delivered gets longer and longer by the hour.

Minister, you have created the crisis. You can give us all the historical statements you want to, but this crisis began to emerge when you made your power grab with Bill 26, when you opened up this Pandora's box while you grabbed for the power that you thought you needed to be able to manage the health care system.

When you were warned that this problem was going to develop, you could have rolled up your sleeves, you could have been working over the last months to find a solution to the crisis. You have done nothing but give glib answers to the women of this province, like going to the United States to get their babies delivered if they can't get their babies delivered in the province of

Ontario. You may think that's an answer, Minister, but it is not an acceptable answer. It's not an acceptable answer for families in Windsor; it's not an acceptable answer for families in St Catharines; it is certainly not acceptable for people who are in Sudbury who certainly can't get to the United States to deliver their babies. I can tell you, it is an absolutely horrifying answer to give to women who may face early labour.

You said last spring that you didn't even think you were going to have a crisis for nine months. The months are ticking off. I ask you again what you are going to do to give some reassurance to women that there will be somebody here in Ontario who can deliver their babies. What are you telling women about who is going to deliver their babies this fall?

Hon Mr Wilson: I think what is wrong with this question is the attempt to unnecessarily worry pregnant women in this province.

I am not aware today, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons is not aware today, of women who after they've called the referral service that's been set up by the College of Physicians and Surgeons at the end of the day aren't able to get an obstetrician. If there are women, this government wants to know, the College of Physicians and Surgeons wants to know, and we want to help with all the resources available at our disposal to make sure women who are about to have a difficult birth and need an obstetrician receive an obstetrician.

But as I stand in my place, I am not aware of individual cases. If they've called the College of Physicians and Surgeons, or my office or any responsible MPP's office, they've been referred to the College of Physicians and Surgeons and so far they've been finding obstetricians, given that just over half of the obstetricians in the province are still receiving patients and providing services.

Again, if the honourable member knows of specific cases, I want to know of those specific cases and I want to help those women.

Mrs McLeod: What's wrong with your answer is that you don't seem to understand the reality of what these women are facing. Do I know a specific case? At last count I know 1,365 specific cases. Their names are available to you. They've been desperate enough to phone an emergency line to ask who is going to deliver their baby. Do they know whether or not they're going to be having a difficult labour? Not until they get into the labour rooms, Minister. What they need to know now, at this point in their pregnancy, is who is going to be there to deliver their babies.

We asked this question of you last spring, Minister. Since last spring we have now found that only 140 of Ontario's 500 obstetricians are taking on new patients. That's half the number that there were when we raised this question with you last spring. When we asked this question of you four months ago, you gave us essentially the same answer. Let me quote it, because you glibly said, "Let's not unnecessarily keep worrying the women of this province, who I'm sure have enough to think about during their pregnancy...." That was four months ago and those mothers that you didn't want to unnecessarily worry, and that the Premier still doesn't want to

unnecessarily worry, are frightened, they are panicked, because they have no answers from you.

Minister, you might be on some kind of an infinite timetable, but I can tell you that those babies are not going to wait for you to get your act together.

1400

I want you to give the women of this province, those pregnant women, the 1,365 women who don't know who's going to deliver their babies, an absolute guarantee that you will stand in your place today and tell them that they will get obstetrical care in their home communities in Ontario at the moment when they need it.

Hon Mr Wilson: I have made the commitment many times, and I'm very pleased to reiterate it today, that this government will do everything it can, and we'll be calling upon the federal government. If access is denied under the Canada Health Act, the federal government also has a responsibility to ensure that that clause of the Canada Health Act is upheld.

We are doing everything we can. We have, contrary to the tone of the honourable member's question, excellent goodwill on both sides —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Excuse me. This is question period. I'd like to hear the questions and I'd like to hear the answers. Please allow it.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Tell them to give it back.

The Deputy Speaker: I will warn the member for Windsor-Sandwich only once, and I've done it.

Hon Mr Wilson: I would remind members of the statements made by the Ontario Medical Association and the Premier and myself just a couple of weeks ago when we indicated goodwill on both sides to try to come to some solutions with the concerns that the obstetricians have and the other specialists and the general and family practitioners in this province.

We'll be sitting down next week to begin a very serious round of negotiations, and I am very confident that we'll be able to address a number of these concerns and that women will receive the services that they need to receive, and that doctors will be pleased, I hope, with the progress we make at the negotiating table with the Ontario Medical Association.

NEGATIVE OPTION BILLING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): My question is for the minister responsible for consumer protection. I'm sure you're aware of the practice of negative option billing. Can you assure this House that you're willing to take all the action necessary to put an end to this unfair and deceitful practice in the province of Ontario?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Obviously the member knows full well that the federal government has just dealt with this particular matter. What we have been looking at, to be honest, just recently I co-chaired a conference of the interprovincial ministers, along with the federal government, and we looked at a number of initiatives to increase consumer protection. I think part of what we're looking at is to get some sort of harmonization of consumer protection work across the country. This is the

direction we're taking. We have looked at a lot of cooperation, and I think many measures, including this one, are things that we should look at to make sure the consumer is protected.

Mr Crozier: The minister should know that the action taken by the federal government involves only cable television. Just last week I, like tens of thousands of people in the province of Ontario, received a notice from my auto insurance company. I was told that unless I call my broker and cancel my existing insurance policy, I will automatically be put on an enhanced plan. Here's the notice. I assume that perhaps even you got one. Of course, nowhere in this notice does it tell me that this enhanced plan is going to cost \$250 to \$300 more than I would pay otherwise.

Thousands of consumers across the province are being forced to take this enhanced insurance automobile coverage without their consent. Do you think it's fair that they're going to be forced to pay for something they didn't ask for, do you condone this negative option billing, and what are you going to do about it?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly the matter of negative billing is something we should be looking at in terms of consumer protection, but I might suggest that the member contact his broker and discuss the issue with him. Clearly the federal government, their cousins, have looked at this matter already, and they have also indicated federally that this is a matter that has actually sorted itself out with the consumer already.

They have taken some measures, and once again I can only say to the member that it's very important for us to work hand in hand with some sort of harmonized policy across this country to deal with these issues. Clearly we're moving in this direction, with the cooperation we've received from the other provinces, to make sure we do have better consumer protection across this country.

Mr Crozier: That answer isn't good enough. November 1 of this year, it says right here —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. Please refrain from heckling.

Mr Crozier: Minister, I repeat, that answer isn't good enough, because we're five weeks away from your insurance policy premium going up. It says here in option 1, "Do nothing until your next policy renewal date." That's the first option they give. They don't give you the cheaper option first. They simply say don't do anything until your policy renews next year. You know what's going to happen, Minister, if you don't do anything? You're going to pay more. You're going to pay \$250 or \$300 more. The tactics used by the auto insurance companies as a direct result of your recent insurance reforms are so unfair that they make the cable companies blush because of the amount of money we're talking about.

I'm going to give you one more opportunity. I don't want to pay, nor does anyone else want to pay, \$200 or \$300 more beginning November 1. Are you going to do anything about it in the next five weeks to stop this negative option billing?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I think the member should perhaps refer to the transition rules and regulations with respect to the insurance changes, but certainly we are

trying to make sure we bolster consumer protection in this province. Perhaps the member would refer to the insurance provisions. I think it might be very educational for him. Certainly we will look at any types of —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. The question has been asked. Please give the minister a chance to answer, and listen to the answer, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Perhaps, once again, the member can refer himself to the transition rules and procedures under the new insurance changes. I think it would be very enlightening for him. Certainly we will look at any type of means to look at consumer protection in this province. I think this is something we're very keen on.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Premier brushed off my questions about reports that Tory insiders were involved in the attempt to smear the complainant in the sexual harassment allegations against Speaker McLean.

Is the Premier aware that the media package distributed by Speaker McLean's lawyer and used to smear the complainant cites a senior adviser in your office, Scott Munnoch, as a reference? Did you approve in advance the involvement of a senior adviser to you in this effort by Speaker McLean to smear the reputation of the complainant in this case?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): No, and he was not involved.

Mr Hampton: I will send across to the Premier part of the smear package that was distributed around here. It very clearly identifies Scott Munnoch as an adviser in the Premier's office, as someone who can be relied upon to challenge the résumé. Would you take that over to the Premier?

1410

I ask the Premier, have you or anyone else in your office discussed this with Scott Munnoch to determine whether his involvement in the smear campaign was improper or might tarnish the reputation of the Premier's office in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Harris: Yes, and he wasn't involved.

Mr Hampton: This is becoming characteristic of the Premier. He goes to England and tells everyone that Ontario has an excellent education system, then comes here and says it's not.

This is a publication put out by Speaker McLean's lawyer. It identifies someone in your office as someone who can be contacted to discredit the résumé of the complainant. How, Mr Premier, could that happen? How is it that someone who is a senior adviser in your office could have their name put down as a reference, "You can call this reference; this person will dispute the integrity of the résumé"? How is it that person's name could be put down on this smear campaign sheet without him knowing about it? Someone must have contacted him and he must have said, "Yes, you can rely upon me to dispute the integrity of this complainant." How could that happen?

Hon Mr Harris: You know not of what you speak.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. Just a minute. Please take your seat.

I'd like the House to recognize, in the Speaker's gallery, Mr Thomas G. Weston, chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the United States of America; Mr Gregory Johnson, consul general of the United States Consulate General; and Frank Ostrander, economic and political officer, United States Consulate General.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I'm asking you to stop the clock. This is the opposition's time, and it is quite unfair of you to use the opposition's time in this way.

The Acting Speaker: The question period is 60 minutes and we'll abide by that. Questions?

Mr Hampton: All right, we'll go at it again. I wonder if the Premier then can provide an explanation. This is a very detailed smear campaign. Several people are listed as people who can be relied upon to discredit Sandi Thompson. It was very carefully put together. Can the Premier explain how such a document, which was very carefully put together by the lawyer for Speaker McLean, could reference someone in your office without him knowing about it? Can you explain that?

Hon Mr Harris: I've told you everything I know. First of all, you're talking about a smear campaign about which I asked when I came back, and you brought it to my attention as well yesterday. I asked the staff why this wasn't brought to my attention. They said, "Because we've asked all the staff and there's absolutely no knowledge by any of our staff of any smear campaign."

I asked about it with specific reference to Mr Scott Munnoch. I understand he was contacted by an investigator, I'm not sure for which party, and told the investigator, as truthfully as he could, any information he had on previous working experience, I believe in Ottawa — before he worked for me or in fact, I don't think he was involved in the provincial government — with one of the parties involved.

To the best of my knowledge, that is all that I know, all that my staff know, and I would assure you — and they all assure me — that nobody's involved in any smear campaign. But they are available to respond to anyone, any investigator, including the Legislative Assembly, that wishes to talk to them about any knowledge they have. That is conducted to them under the rules that were set down, which I assure you, to the best of my knowledge have been followed by me, by all of our party, by all the members and indeed the members of the Legislature. If you are implying something other than that, you are 180 degrees in the wrong direction, you are off base, and your allegations not only are false, they are actually quite insulting.

Mr Hampton: Mr Munnoch may have come in contact with the complainant at some time in the past in some other job. The fact is that Mr Munnoch works in your office now. The fact is that a lawyer with the kind of experience of Mr Teplitsky would not put out this kind of document without phoning around and asking people: "Can we rely upon you to discredit Sandi Thompson? Can we rely upon you to discredit her résumé?" It is a fact — it is here in writing — that Scott Munnoch is listed as someone who can be relied upon to discredit

Sandi Thompson and it is a fact that Scott Munnoch works in your office.

If you think someone just dreamt up this document, if you think someone just dreamt up Scott Munnoch's name, I don't think Mr Teplitsky believes that; I don't think anybody else believes that. How is it that someone in your office who works for you, a senior adviser, would put his name down as being a reference that could be relied upon to discredit Sandi Thompson? How is it that that could happen, Mr Premier?

Hon Mr Harris: Quite frankly, it did not happen. It could not happen and it did not happen. Mr Munnoch did not put his name down to be used as a reference. I can tell you this, that Mr Munnoch can be counted upon to do this: to tell the truth.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Oriole.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): My question is for the Minister of Health.

Mr Hampton: I have another supplementary, I believe.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, you do. I apologize for that.

Mr Hampton: Can you tell us this then, Premier? Why did Mr Munnoch, when this was being circulated around Queen's Park, not right away call Mr Teplitsky? Why did he not publicly disavow this? Why did he not publicly dissociate himself from this immediately? There were, as I said, reports in the media that this was being done. We checked with the journalist yesterday and he insists his story is factual. When this was in the public press, when this smear campaign was being conducted, why did Mr Munnoch not immediately disavow any relationship with this? Why did he not come forward publicly and say: "I have no relationship with this. I am not associated with this. I want my name taken off of this"?

Hon Mr Harris: I think Mr Munnoch has done everything that is appropriate. He has responded to any questions that were directed his way by anyone involved in this, will continue to do so, will continue to tell the truth. Quite frankly, if you understand the procedures involved around the whole case, that is what we are all obligated to do, as I understand it, I believe in as non-public a way as is possible. Mr Munnoch has fulfilled that commitment, as I am told, in an honest, upfront and truthful way, which you may want to question — I think the Speaker did you a favour by bypassing the last supplementary — you might want to question in yourself.

1420

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): My question is for the Minister of Health. I had the opportunity to watch W5 on CTV news. I'm sure you're aware that the W5 story focused on the American firm National Medical Care Enterprises and, as Texas lawyer James Moriarty called it, "The best example of fraud in health care that there ever is going to be."

It's been estimated that the Ontario health insurance plan has paid close to \$100 million to send Ontarians to the United States for unsatisfactory drug and alcohol

abuse treatment. Almost \$600 million has been recovered by the government of the United States and others in their actions against National Medical Care Enterprises and other American companies, and yet last night I witnessed you, our Minister of Health, say that you'd been advised that it would not make fiscal sense to launch an action against these American companies to recover OHIP funds for fraudulent claims.

Notwithstanding the fact that I believe it makes sense to spend \$1 million to retrieve \$100 million, I understand that Mr Moriarty and other American lawyers would be willing to represent OHIP on a contingency fee basis. He said, "It won't cost you a nickel." Will you swallow your pride? The statute of limitations runs out the end of November. Will you call up Mr Moriarty and take action against the fraudulent companies and save Ontario taxpayers the dollars they deserve to have saved?

Applause.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): That member does not deserve applause. In 1989, when she and her government were in office and she was health minister, thousands of people were going to the United States to these illegitimate clinics and taxpayers were being ripped off. I will take the occasion to commend the NDP. When they were in government, they finally turned the tap off, in 1993. Neither of you bothered to sue for any money back.

I'm the only one on the public record who's taken three stabs at this. I've got three legal opinions here, two on contingency — I'm sorry, two stabs at it, one in 1992 — the same advice given to the previous ministers. Let me read you from the world's largest international law firm located in the United States, the very last lines:

"It is therefore our opinion it would not be worthwhile to pursue these claims. For these reasons, Baker and McKenzie" — the name of the law firm — "must decline to accept representation of OHIP on a contingency fee basis, but is ready and willing to represent OHIP on a standard hourly fee and expense basis."

Having said all this, because I too saw W5, I too was very disappointed in the Texas lawyer, Mr Moriarty and his comments about three different governments, frankly, so I challenged Mr Moriarty today to get up here next week on a plane and take this case on a contingency basis. He has accepted that challenge finally and he will be up here next week at his own expense.

Of course, if some major law firm wants to upfront the money to get back \$85 million on behalf of Ontario taxpayers, as I told W5 in a 20-minute interview, I'd be happy to have any law firm in the world take on this case. Unfortunately, the three firms we've asked to date, which are the world's best at this, have said no.

Mrs Caplan: The fact is that this minister was told that he had a case and that it would cost him \$1 million for the potential recovery of \$100 million. He didn't think that made fiscal sense. I will tell him that the W5 story raised some serious questions regarding the management of OHIP and the minister's competence.

I've heard this Minister of Health and this government, over and over again, talk about fighting fraud in health care. I agree that we must attack fraud vigorously. We now have an example of clear-cut fraud and proof that

we can recover millions of dollars. I have a copy of the letter from Mr Moriarty, the fact that he is coming and has said that there are many US law firms that would have worked on a contingency basis. I say to the minister his answer has been nonsense.

There's something else he should do. He should conduct an investigation into the management of OHIP practices because there are two important questions: First, was OHIP aware of the fraudulent claims against these firms and, if so, why did it keep paying? Secondly, according to W5, there was a \$900-million increase in drug and alcohol treatment programs over a four-year period. Why did no one at OHIP investigate this? Will you begin action that will launch this investigation to make sure that the administration and management practices at OHIP are appropriate?

Hon Mr Wilson: I'll make one clarification to my previous comment. Mr Moriarty would only commit to come up here and consider taking the case on a contingency basis. He wouldn't even say yes, in spite of what he said to W5.

Secondly, I would be happy to release all the OHIP records approved by the Liberal government for the thousands of people who went down to these unreputable treatment centres and can assure you that beginning in 1993 the NDP turned the tap off on this. We have sent no one under this government, and no one since the NDP turned the tap off, down to any of these firms. One of our reinvestments is some several millions of dollars to repatriate 76 acquired-brain-injury people so they can get that service here with the experts in Ontario and not have to rely on US firms whose credibility is called into question. But if you'd like me to release your records, you give me written permission and I'd be happy to do that.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is to the Attorney General. Yesterday we talked to you in this House, both opposition parties, about the destruction that you've wrought in the family support plan. Let us be very clear: We are talking about the problems of people who have never had problems receiving their support payments before, until you closed the regional offices, lost their records and set up a phone system no one can reach.

Having said that, I want to pursue the suggestion of the minister responsible for women's issues, who suggested that we bring cases to you here. I will do exactly that. The case I have is a woman named Lisa Wood-Gover, who lives in London, Ontario. She has two children. She's been on the family support plan for the last two years. She has never had a problem or a delay in receipt of her money. The last payment she had was made in August. She normally receives \$550 a month. She's working really hard to stay off family allowance, but she's right at the line. She has not received a cent since the first of August. She has already incurred a \$100 charge for an NSF cheque, which was for her mortgage payment. She couldn't make that mortgage payment, she has \$80 in related legal fees because of that and she's afraid she's going to lose her house. What do you say to Lisa Wood-Gover?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I am not going to respond to any individual case. If the member wants to provide me with the details, I will look into it so that we can ensure the problem is solved. What I will say is that in today's Globe and Mail Robert Sheppard described the family support plan as a plan that has been "a total dog's breakfast from well before the Tories took over." I am determined that we will restructure the plan, that we will provide proper enforcement techniques and that we will make this plan, once and for all, the best family support plan in this country. I am not prepared, as other parties have been, to ignore these problems. They will be corrected and we will ensure that women and children are going to get a much fairer shake than they ever got before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): The member for Sudbury East.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): To the minister, as I recall in your own business plan, you already said that this plan is the best anywhere in this country. All you've done by shutting down the offices and cutting off the staff is to ensure that women and children who regularly used to receive a cheque now don't. That's a fact. You may not want to hear about the cases, but I have 50 in my office and I'm going to give one to you today. So far, of the 18 we've sent to your MPP liaison, Mr Pengelly, we have received no response, and of the other, remaining cases, we have only received eight responses; 42 people still don't have a response in my office.

1430

Here's one for you today: Louise Brunette. Last payment received: \$486.22, on July 23, 1996. Her arrears now stand at \$972.44. She usually receives a cheque once a month, by the 20th of every month. The employer of the payor garnished \$486.22 from his paycheque on August 15, 1996. Louise Brunette has not received the August cheque, nor the September cheque. She's been with the family support plan for three years and has never had a payment problem until the cuts you made to the FSP. How do you explain to Louise Brunette today why it is she can't receive moneys that she's legally entitled to?

Hon Mr Harnick: Again, I am not going to respond to an individual case. I say to the member, if you provide me with the details, we will look into that case.

What I will say again is that you can criticize all you want what we are trying to do, but we will create a plan that will solve the problems that have been inherent in this plan for a long period of time, and we will create a plan where people have phone access, where people receive their cheques much more quickly than they've ever received them before, and we will correct the problems that have existed with this plan during the past —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Order, please. I ask for your cooperation. Order. You've asked a question. Listen to the answer, please.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): We were. We were listening.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Fort York, order. Minister?

The member for Scarborough West.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Under the standing orders, I understood us to be in question period. I have in my hand a fax from the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism in which he asks me to ask this question:

"Minister, it has been over a year since this government took office" —

The Acting Speaker: It's not a point of order. There's no point of order.

The member for Scarborough West.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. You're losing some time on your question period. You're losing time.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Scarborough West.

JOB CREATION

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): I can ask the question better, Mike.

My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. The member for Sudbury, order. Order. It's your time. I'll wait.

The member for Scarborough West.

Mr Jim Brown: In the past year, Minister, the —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Scarborough West.

Mr Jim Brown: In the past year, Minister, the —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Scarborough West.

Mr Jim Brown: We've only got 16 minutes left.

This government has implemented economic development policies to create jobs, Minister — quite different from the grant-based giveaways of the two previous governments. How well have these policies of fiscal restraint and ending of giveaways to business succeeded to date?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): I would first of all, like the —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

Hon Mr Saunderson: I first of all would like to say that I think it does all of our hearts good to laugh a little bit and obviously it's the first time any laughing's been done in this House for quite a long time. So I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough West for his question and introducing a little humour into this House today, or into this new session.

I'm happy to report that our policies over the last year have been exceedingly well-received by the business community. As we heard yesterday — I see the leader of the third party leaving right now because I think he does

not like to hear good news, because we've had 150,000 jobs created over the last year since our election. That means there are 150,000 people working now who were not working a year ago. That is a big achievement and business is very glad about that. In fact, 89,000 net new jobs have been created since the beginning of this year; up to August 31. These are very good statistics.

So our policies are working very well and even the member — I want you to hear this — for Scarborough-Agincourt recently complimented this government and called the job numbers very solid.

Youth employment right now is 2.8% higher than it was two years ago. That is a big achievement. Yesterday, the member for Wilson Heights said that there were no greenfield developments occurring in this province, just add-ons. Well, I'd like to inform this House that just on Monday there were two greenfield openings that I was able to attend. One was a German company in Agincourt. Another was a Japanese company in Listowel. These are creating about 100 new jobs.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have the supplementary. Could I put the supplementary? On the point of order, the numbers are indeed solid, Minister.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Please take your seat. The member for Scarborough West.

Mr Jim Brown: Some of my private sector constituents are delighted with our course and intend to hire more and create jobs. What, in your opinion, is driving the recovery, and what businesses, the ones doing the hiring — what are they saying, Minister?

1440

Hon Mr Saunderson: In response to the supplementary question, first of all, I think the main thing for the member for Scarborough West is that the business climate that we have created is the business climate that business wants. I think the numbers I just quoted to you are proving the fact that our policies are indeed working.

Recently I had a chance to take a trade mission to Texas from the petrochemical industry sponsored by the member for Sarnia and myself. We also took high-tech companies from the Ottawa region out to California. I'd like to respond to the question by reading a comment from a letter that we received from the Canadian consul general in Dallas, Texas, about our trip to Texas. It reads as follows:

"We have had extremely positive reactions from those who attended the seminar, which did much to provide answers to questions that evidently persist among the business community about Canadian conditions. I think your messages as well as the outstanding presentations made by your private sector colleagues did much to set the record straight."

PERLEY HOSPITAL

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, it's truly disturbing to learn of what your ministry is doing to the veterans and some of the seniors in the Ottawa-Carleton area. I would

really like to know what could possibly be the rationale for your ministry for breaking binding agreements and commitments with the Perley and the Rideau Veterans health care centre.

You must be aware that most of the patients who are referred to the Perley are referred by nursing homes because they need more care. The Perley in fact has a per patient, per day per diem of \$195. This is the lowest of all the hospitals in all of the Ottawa-Carleton area. Changing its status to a home for the aged under the Charitable Institutions Act would necessitate referrals back to the acute care hospitals at \$500 a day or to the chronic care hospitals at \$350 a day. It doesn't seem to make good sense to me.

Minister, why has your ministry and why have you forced the board to take the unusual step of proceeding with legal action against the ministry, which is not an easy track for them to take? How can you justify having your parliamentary assistant attend the opening less than a year ago of the Perley, a \$65-million facility, and celebrate the opening and then, a year later, condemn it to be a graveyard?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): This deal was made, including the \$65 million, in 1989 under that member's government. In 1992 the NDP government and the federal government signed an agreement with the Perley. It is that agreement that the Perley is now trying to get out of. I do not know the legal basis that they feel they will bring forward at this time.

I will say, though, that I have letters. We had immediate reaction from the Ontario Nursing Home Association. I can't find the letter right now but — oh, here it is. It says, "Fifty-six thousand persons in the province of Ontario would be insulted by the statement that their long-term-care facility home is a graveyard." That's what the Perley called our 56,000 top-quality, world-class nursing home beds.

We also had a letter the same day of their press conference from the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, which expressed a similar degree of outrage that the Perley would criticize the almost 500 nursing homes that we have in this province.

The Perley signed an agreement that, beginning on October 1 of this year, they would have seven years to convert to a long-term-care facility. I've checked with two similar conversions that took place under previous governments. Today the patients are very happy in those long-term-care facilities. One was in Windsor and one was in St Marys. Secondly, the communities indicate in those conversions that people are very, very happy.

I suggest you talk to your federal counterparts who are signatory to this agreement. I say to the Perley that over the next seven years they will get the attention of this government in living up to the previous commitment. I think it's good for the residents of that facility to receive the type of care they will receive under the new multilevel care funding scheme.

I also want to tell the veterans, because I think it's morally reprehensible frankly, that the administration — and by the way, nursing homes don't have presidents, vice-presidents, huge administrations, department heads, so a lot of money to be saved that can be given to those

veterans in terms of their care, and to those patients, is currently tied up in hospital administration.

My understanding of the talks held by my predecessor is that Perley, up to this point, was in full agreement and in fact signed that agreement, and I have a copy of that agreement in the back room.

I hope we can work out the concerns the Perley has, but at this point, they've signed an agreement. I think it's a good agreement for the veterans and the 250 priority beds are secure under this trilateral agreement also and nobody is going to deny veterans the service they deserve for having preserved our freedoms and given us the life that we have today.

Mr Patten: So, Minister, what you're saying is that you won't honour an agreement that was signed, a legal document, with the ministry; that's what you're saying. You and your officials were less than honest with those people. They didn't know. They were dropped a letter informing them. They've been contacting your office and you've been incommunicado. You haven't responded, except one letter where you said, "I am pleased to be part of a unique" —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Order. The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr Patten: You said, and I quote your letter, "I am pleased to be part of this unique three-way partnership." When your recent actions delisted the Perley — it was to their surprise, by the way, that's not the original agreement — as a public hospital, what did it do? It severely limited the level of care and services; now they'll have to move veterans out of that facility. You'll have eliminated special treatment for many of the patients; you'll create a second-class veterans service in the Ottawa-Carleton area not compared at all to those in cities such as Toronto or London. You've downgraded the services, and most seriously and fundamentally, breached agreements entered into with the Perley Hospital and veterans' affairs, all prior to the restructuring commission that's in Ottawa at the moment. What's going on?

Hon Mr Wilson: It's a good question. Nobody's violated any agreement. That's not the accusation that they made at their press conference that I understand. They just want out of an agreement that they signed is the way I understand it. They weren't accusing me or anyone else. I haven't done anything to violate any agreement. I know that local MPPs have met with our assistant deputy ministers and expressed Perley's concerns. The legal action takes me completely by surprise, as it should take you completely by surprise, because you guys signed all this.

I think it's a good deal. I've looked at it in my heart of hearts and my conscience and I've said, "Jeez, with hospital restructuring going on, why would they want to take an 18% reduction over the next three years?" I don't understand, when the object of all of our health care decisions has to be the patients, and the patients, according to 56,000 other patients in this province, are receiving top-quality care in our long-term-care facilities. I think it's an excellent opportunity for the Perley to redevelop and become one of the best long-term-care facilities in the province. Having said that, we'll have to see what the basis of their future challenge is.

1450

EDUCATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training. On page 8 of the so-called Common Sense Revolution it says, "Classroom funding for education will be guaranteed." Since that document was published and this government came into power, we've seen over \$400 million in cuts in grants, which the minister has acknowledged on an annualized basis works out to \$1 billion in cuts. Last week the minister announced further cuts of somewhere between \$600 million and \$900 million in grants, a total of \$1.8 billion in education cuts.

We now have a crisis that the minister promised to all of the people in the province in education. We've seen class sizes increased across the province, yet at the same time the Premier of the province, speaking to foreign investors, says, according to the 1996 world competitiveness report, business leaders rank Canada's education system, a large part of which is the Ontario system, ahead of the US in terms of its ability to meet the needs of a competitive economy.

The Premier doesn't say the system isn't working, the system is broken. Why don't you at least for once in Ontario pretend you're talking to foreign investors and admit that we have a good education system in this province? We should celebrate its successes and we should fund it properly so it can continue to serve the students of this province.

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I'm surprised the member opposite would be so wrong about the one salient point in his question, which is that this minister and this government have not announced any targets for further reductions in education. That may be forthcoming later on in this calendar year, but he's just plain wrong on that subject.

I am very proud of some of the excellent programs in our school system in Ontario. I think it's a good school system in Ontario. I've said that across this province over the last year. Unlike some of the members opposite, I and my colleagues are not content to leave the system as merely a good system. We want the best system of education in the world for our young people, and we won't rest until we have it.

Mr Wildman: Is the minister now denying the position he's taken almost immediately upon being appointed, and since, that the education system in this province is broken? Most recently he said that we're locked in a situation where educators in this province are determined to provide a 1950s classroom for students. Is he denying that he said that? If he isn't denying that, if he can confirm that has been his position, how does that square with the position the Premier takes in talking to foreign investors about how good our education system is and how well it serves the students of the province and the economy of this province?

Hon Mr Snobelen: As I said a moment ago, I'm very pleased with some of the excellent programs we have in Ontario, and I believe that some of those excellent programs should be available to all the students in Ontario instead of just some of the students in Ontario.

I stood here a year ago and I said that we would have a more affordable, more accountable, higher quality education system in the province of Ontario. Over the last year we have helped to make the system more affordable by providing school boards with the opportunity to lower the cost of administration. We've added to the accountability to the public by having the College of Teachers, by releasing relevant data to the public so they can know what's going on about the cost and the quality of the education system.

We're very proud of our record on quality. We've introduced a relevant secondary school program. We've doubled our commitment to the technology incentives. We've announced the EQAO, an independent, quality body. We've got the College of Teachers I already referred to, which I think will help the quality of education in Ontario.

The member opposite can count on our government to continue to work to have a more affordable, a more accountable and, most importantly, a higher quality system of education for our young people in Ontario. He can count on that.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: During his answer to my question, the Minister of Health referred to legal opinions. I'd ask that he table those legal opinions. I have a legal opinion dated 1992. If the minister doesn't have that, I'd be pleased to table it so that he can have a copy of it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): That is not a point of order.

PETITIONS

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health had started to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled on July 15, 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 co-payment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee, or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario,

"We, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge this government to repeal this user fee plan because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, sensitive or accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I have signed my name to this petition.

ONTARIO HYDRO

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a petition on the possible sell-off of Ontario Hydro. It says:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the matter of selling Ontario Hydro is likely to come before the Legislature in the near future;

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, who have, through the payment of electricity rates, paid for Ontario Hydro, are concerned about privatization of Ontario Hydro, leading to higher rates, lower reliability and compromised nuclear safety;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"Please preserve the public ownership of Ontario Hydro and refuse to sell this important public asset."

I affix my signature to this petition.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): I have a petition here signed by a number of Niagara residents, a petition to end the spring bear hunt.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring, after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring bear hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

HEALTH CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to recognize Mr Clarence Soule, a very dedicated senior who champions the right of seniors, for his hard work in collecting hundreds of names for this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario health plan is designed to give all taxpayers, including seniors, equal medical care; and

"Whereas many premiers at the premiers' conference recently held are recommending changing to a two-tier system; and

"Whereas we know that under the two-tier Americanized system they have 30 to 40 million of their citizens without health care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that we retain our present one-tier system of health where we have the Canada Health Act and Ontarians' health needs are assured in a fair and equitable manner."

I affix my name to it and thank Mr Soule very much for it.

AMALGAMATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a petition signed by approximately 640 residents of the township of Plummer Additional, and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned residents and seasonal residents of the township of Plummer Additional, are opposed to amalgamation with the town of Bruce Mines at this time."

POLICE SERVICES

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I'm presenting a petition on behalf of my honourable colleague from Victoria-Haliburton. The petition reads:

"We are concerned, as permanent and seasonal residents of the county of Haliburton, that in the interests of cost-cutting our county will be the only county in Ontario without a full-fledged police service.

"Whereas the Minden detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police has been the only police service in the county of Haliburton;

"Whereas in times of recession the crime rate usually increases, calling for more police service;

"Whereas the closure of the Minden detachment will make it increasingly difficult for our officers to police the county of Haliburton;

"Whereas the present system of calling a communications centre makes the process of obtaining proper police protection, service and advice more and more difficult;

"Whereas the closure of the Minden detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police will have serious financial repercussions for the county of Haliburton and will have a detrimental effect on property values in the county of Haliburton;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Take whatever measures are necessary to retain a full-fledged Ontario Provincial Police detachment in its present location on Highway 35 in Minden, Ontario."

It's signed by 3,100 residents of that county.

1500

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orillia): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the community of Song Meadoway, York Condominium Corp No 148, a townhouse development at Steeles and 404 in North York.

"Whereas on Monday, August 26, 1996, a runaway gravel truck crossed Steeles Avenue at the exit ramp from the 404, hitting a van and seriously injuring the driver before smashing through a townhouse, killing Kim Wong and injuring her two young sons;

"We, the undersigned, as owners, residents of York Condominium Corp No 148 and other concerned citizens, request that the issue of truck safety inspections be taken more seriously. This would include both better legislation and enforcement practices."

I add my name to this important petition. I also have a letter that I will be sending along with the petition to Minister Al Palladini.

BEAR HUNTING
CHASSE AUX OURS

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) : J'ai une pétition de la part des citoyens de Timmins et des environs faisant affaire avec la chasse aux ours en printemps. It is a petition to end the spring bear hunt and it's addressed to us, the legislators of this province. It reads:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of bears killed in the spring are females, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring bear hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

It's signed by some 100 people from the city of Timmins and I affix my signature to the petition.

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition that the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation should not close the driver examination centre at the Manor House in Sutton."

This petition is signed by more than 1,500 constituents of Durham-York who are 16 years of age or older. I agree with this petition and have affixed by name to it.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have before me quite literally thousands of petitions, faxes and letters sent by our constituents in Port Arthur and Thunder Bay in northwestern Ontario responding to the initial report of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, a report that shocked and upset all of us in Thunder Bay. The people of Thunder Bay responded by acting and calling

on the commission to change their mind, to prove to them that they were wrong about their decisions.

I'm going to read just one of the petitions and I will be putting more on the record as the days go on while we wait for the results of the final report.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We do not believe that you have made the best choice for the health care system in northwestern Ontario. We are deeply concerned with the speed and amount of bed reductions you have dictated. We are also concerned with your intention to close three hospitals out of the five currently operating in Thunder Bay. These hospitals, all seeming to be concentrated, are in fact providing a central regional service. By reducing the total number of beds from 954 to 526, and in the process eliminating psychiatric and chronic care hospitals, the 428-bed reduction will leave the lives of our families, our friends and ourselves at risk.

"If it was your intention to act on behalf of the interests of the public, we as members of the public ask you to reflect upon your conscience for you will be ultimately responsible for the error in your decision."

RENT REGULATION
RÉGLEMENTATION DES LOYERS

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud): J'ai ici une autre pétition signée par des centaines de résidents de la ville de Timmins et des environs, cette fois sur la question du contrôle des loyers.

"To Premier Mike Harris, Minister Al Leach and members of the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario is planning to destroy the present system of rent control;

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative Party made no mention of scrapping rent control during the election campaign of 1995 or in the Common Sense Revolution;" — I do remember that, Mr Speaker —

"Whereas a number of Conservative candidates in ridings with high tenant populations campaigned during the 1995 election on a platform of protecting the current rent control system;" — I remember that as well —

"Whereas the government has consulted with special-interest groups representing landlords and developers while cutting funding to organizations representing the 3.5 million tenants of Ontario;

"Whereas, although all renters will suffer, seniors and others on fixed income will suffer particular hardship if rent controls are abolished;

"Whereas eliminating rent control will result in skyrocketing rents in Ontario,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to stop the attack on the 3.5 million tenants in this province and to stop this crazy attack on rent control."

I've signed that petition.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Bill Grimmitt (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I have a petition concerning the spring bear hunt which has been

signed by approximately 283 persons, most of whom are resident in my riding and I'd like to file that today.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have the following petition:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario promised to cut not one cent from health care; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has proceeded to cut over \$1 billion of much-needed dollars from the community hospitals; and

"Whereas the broken health care promise means that St Catharines General Hospital can no longer afford to employ 20% of its workforce resulting in 220 people paying the price for the funding shortfall from the provincial government; and

"Whereas the people of St Catharines have come to rely upon the caring professional service provided by health caregivers at the general hospital, the Shaver Hospital and the Hotel Dieu Hospital and who view this betrayal by the Mike Harris government as an attack on quality health care services in the Niagara region; and

"Whereas the only area where the government has experienced any success in the field of health has been in its ability to threaten institutions and organizations who have been cut off at the knees by drastic cuts that they will be cut even further or closed should they not cooperate;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government keep their election promise and restore health care spending to the level at which they promised during the last election campaign so that the general hospital and other hospitals in St Catharines are able to keep the valuable services of all of their employees."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

BEAR HUNTING CHASSE AUX OURS

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) : J'ai encore des pétitions, cette fois-ci de la communauté de Schumacher, faisant affaire avec la chasse aux ours.

It reads as follows:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are females, some of which have cubs;

"Whereas over 70% of the orphan cubs do not survive the first year;

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait;

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait;

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring bear hunt,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

Again it is signed by a number of people from Schumacher and I will present that petition on their behalf.

1510

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 27, 1996, Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 15th report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): Yes, Mr Speaker. I have a number of reports.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 106(g)11, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 27, 1996, Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 16th, 17th and 18th reports.

The Acting Speaker: Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Laughren: No, not on these. They are deemed to have been adopted, I believe.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 106(g)11, the reports are deemed to be adopted by the House.

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 27, 1996, Mr Laughren presented the committee's report on agencies, boards and commissions, number 22, and moved the adoption of its recommendations.

Mr Laughren: This is simply a report on the Social Assistance Review Board, which the committee reviewed as a regular part of its duties.

I move the adjournment of the debate on that report.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 27, 1996, Mr Laughren presented the committee's report on agencies, boards and commissions, number 23, and moved the adoption of its recommendations.

Mr Laughren: The final report deals with the issue of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Health Council. As you know, there was some controversy surrounding appointments to that board, and the committee dealt with that issue and interviewed people from the health council.

I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Pursuant to the order of the House of June 27, 1996, Mr Colle from the standing committee on public accounts presented the committee's report on the Ontario Board of Parole and moved the adoption of its recommendations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Does the Vice-Chairman wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): No, Mr Speaker.

I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Carroll from the standing committee on general government presented a report on the tenant protection package.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): No, Mr Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr66, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ONTARIO PLUMBING INSPECTORS ASSOCIATION INC ACT, 1996

Mr Cleary moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr67, An Act respecting the Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU PROCESSUS D'AUTORISATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE

Mr Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to improve the Efficiency of the Environmental Approvals Process and Certain Other Matters / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à améliorer l'efficacité du processus d'autorisation environnementale et concernant certaines autres questions.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): It's my pleasure today to speak to my colleagues about the Environmental Approvals Improvement Act, Bill 57, which was introduced by my prede-

cessor the member for Guelph, the Honourable Brenda Elliott. I want to thank her for doing all of the work in putting this particular bill together and thank her for her leadership in bringing this particular approach to the Legislature.

I am in the fortunate position of picking up many of the initiatives which were put forward by my predecessor and carrying them forward. I believe, as I have learned over the past four weeks, that she has taken some great initiatives on behalf of the people of Ontario to enhance our environment. These kinds of moves will make us become less conscious of the processes that we were going through but more focused on the actual results and getting down to solving the real problems of the environment in the province of Ontario. I guess that's what this government is about and that's what I'm about.

As the new Minister of Environment, I plan to take the lead from my predecessor in facing the problems that we are faced with here in the province of Ontario and solving them, unlike previous governments and previous ministers in previous governments with regard to the environment. For far too long we have watched problems accumulate in the Ministry of Environment and in the environment in Ontario, and we have paid more attention to talking about them than actually solving them.

Mr Speaker, as you know, I am extremely fortunate in having not only a legal background but also an engineering background, and I am most heartened by the fact that the technical community who have talked to me in the recent past have said to me: "Let's get down, let's roll up our sleeves, let's solve the problems we have in the province of Ontario and make this place the cleanest place. Let's have the cleanest water, let's have the cleanest air, and let's get together. Both of us can work together to achieve this." Some of the initiatives that are on the table now, quite frankly, are going to allow us to do that.

One of the key factors with regard to the Environmental Approvals Improvement Act is that we have recognized that our current systems just aren't working as well as they could. As a government, we've come to focus, as I mentioned before, too strongly on the process as opposed to the results we achieve. Protecting our environment is the truly important result which I want to speak about today.

In the past, the province has enjoyed a fairly high standard of environmental protection. As the new minister, I want to tell the members that I am very deeply committed to maintaining this standard and actually improving it. We can do better. We can do better by using better methodologies, better tools and more efficient means to improve upon the environmental protection my ministry delivers.

1520

While I am a new minister with my own ideas on many of the issues, I am in complete agreement with the shift in direction that has been taken by this ministry. It's a direction that we can characterize as steering and not rowing. It means that the ministry's primary, overriding role is to set tough standards and then see that they are enforced.

In the past the ministry, and not only the ministry in this government over the past year but the ministry over

its lifetime, has had difficulty managing because we failed to focus on the more important risks to our environment and the more important problems to our environment. We've spread ourselves too thin, in other words. I'm sure you are aware of the term "ministry of everything" which has come to be applied to energy and environment. This term tells you that somewhere along the line the ministry's mandate has become obscured, impairing its effectiveness.

This government has for the first time developed business plans for each of the ministries, identifying the core businesses that we should be involved in. At my ministry we have identified five core businesses which are our primary focus: pollution prevention, remediation, conservation, energy planning and environmental stewardship. The reforms we now propose, whether in the area of approvals, environmental assessment or regulatory reform, will enable us to concentrate our efforts in these areas. These are the areas that we believe will provide the greatest environmental benefit and protection for the people of Ontario.

We are looking for ways to go beyond the command and control approach traditionally taken by this ministry. Take the example of voluntary programs, something, quite frankly, which was introduced some five or six years ago and was participated in by the previous government. Some would have you believe that these programs eliminate the requirement for dischargers to meet our standards. That simply is not true. Voluntary programs are a creative way of recognizing those industries that are going beyond their legal requirements for pollution reduction. They are geared towards those companies that have repeatedly gone one better than the government has required of them. The more they reduce, the better it is for the environment. If they're doing better than the legal requirements that remain in place, then we should support them and encourage them to do even more.

We are also removing unnecessary barriers which serve no benefit to the environment. Our regulatory reforms include proposals to remove several obsolete regulations such as the regulation for setting efficiency standards for types of heaters which are now banned in the province of Ontario. We've also called for the repeal of regulations that require companies to report on substances they can't and don't produce. These regulations do not contribute to the protection or the improvement of the environment, they contribute only to an empty process. Common sense tells us they should be eliminated.

The people of Ontario want an environmental protection system that produces tangible results, and that's what we're going to do. Today I have the pleasure of bringing forward this bill that will help us meet that goal.

I want to cover the four major amendment areas that are included in Bill 57, the Environmental Approvals Improvement Act. First, Bill 57 proposes improvements to the approval processes with regard to certificates of approval. We propose additional, more workable procedures for activities that have predictable and controllable effects on the environment. As it now stands, you need a different, unique certificate of approval for each and every project. This form of approval demands individual intense scrutiny of every aspect of a proposal.

You might say, "That's good," but this involves considerable cost and expense which could be better put forward to meeting the problem of environmental protection. In some cases the cost and the time, quite frankly, aren't justified; in some they are. That's what we're trying to divide here in this bill.

We propose the establishment of standardized regulations containing rules customized to certain classes of common activities. As a result, an activity carried out under a regulation would no longer need an individual certificate of approval. If it's something that's done every day in the province of Ontario, it's common, then we can in fact make that a regulated process rather than asking that person or that particular company to get a certificate.

The types of activities and the standards to be imposed will be decided through full consultation. For all other activities, the existing approvals process will remain. So we're going to try to divide between those processes which are different in each and every case and those which are repetitive over and over again.

An example of the kind of activity which goes on over and over again and will have a standardized regulation is the installation of exhaust fans in restaurants. At the present time, if a restaurant wants to put in the restaurant an exhaust fan, it must get a certificate of approval. I believe there are over 15,000 restaurants in the province of Ontario. This has been done over and over again. Quite frankly, we don't need to go through the process of getting a certificate of approval for each and every one of those restaurants, because the process is common and we can form a regulation or rules which define how that should be done and done in a fashion which will exhaust the fumes from that particular restaurant in a standardized form.

I guess you could compare that kind of example to our building code. In our building code we have many, many requirements which we put into a code, a regulation. We don't require, when you build a house, that you go and get a certificate of approval for the trusswork that you put in the house. We don't require that you get a certificate of approval for the plumbing. We don't require a certificate of approval for a lot of the different activities which are put into that house, but we require that the tradespeople who are putting forward that work follow the code. We will require, of course, that the people who are putting in the exhaust fans in the restaurants follow the code of the environment, the regulations which we are putting forward, and if they are broken, that particular exhaust fan would have to be removed.

This benefits us in a twofold manner. Firstly, it allows the ministry to treat every application for the simple, common, predictable activities in exactly the same way each time, rather than reinventing the wheel in every single case.

As well, it will allow us to communicate to the public exactly what the requirements are for this kind of activity. There will be certainty as to how to meet the requirements to put in the exhaust fan in the restaurant. They will, in turn, find it easier to understand what is required of them, and there will no longer be the necessity of waiting for some period of time while somebody processes a useless piece of paper for the certificate of approval.

Our improved approval process will maintain top-quality protection for the environment at a lower cost to the Ontario taxpayers. It will also provide clarity and certainty for industry, municipalities and the small business owner. This is consistent with our goal of making services relevant and responsive to all Ontarians.

The second portion of the bill deals with the Environmental Compensation Corp. This corporation was set up under the Liberal government in 1985 for the sole purpose of managing compensation claims involving spills of environmental contaminants. This corporation, over its 10-year life, has given out about \$680,000 to \$700,000, but it has cost \$3 million to manage that amount of money. In other words, in order to give out \$700,000, we've had to spend four times as much on the administration to give that money out. Notwithstanding that ridiculous fact, of the \$700,000 we gave out, about half of that was to another level of government. The benefits of this particular plan have not been to the benefit of the environment. It would have been much better had we spent that money on remedying some of the problems we have in the province of Ontario.

1530

The court system remains there for people to gain compensation from those responsible for the spill, and under our present law they remain responsible for that spill as well. That is clear and that is not changing.

The third part of the bill repeals the Ontario Waste Management Corporation Act. This ends the final chapter of the 15-year, \$145-million boondoggle that has ended in a failure to find a hazardous waste facility. This was invented by our previous government, was carried on by the Liberals during their mandate, and then it was carried on by the NDP during its mandate as well. Finally, we have come to the conclusion that the Ontario Waste Management Corp was indeed a waste of Ontario taxpayers' money, and we're putting an end to it in this bill.

Lastly, we propose amendments that would give the Ministry of Environment and Energy the authority to recover administrative costs for some specific services. The ministry already has some of this authority to charge fees in a number of areas, including certificates of approval, examinations, licences and permits. The amendments we propose will consolidate these authorities and provide a general fee-making capability. We are expanding the authority of my ministry and myself to set these fees for any registration or record required by regulation or legislation, and we may charge fees under this regulation whenever we provide information, services or recording.

Two key issues where we will introduce fees are generator registration and waste manifests. By imposing fees, my ministry will ensure that the costs of administering these services are paid by those who produce and handle waste. In other words, it's user-pay. We're not in any way going to have fees which exceed the cost of providing those services or producing those certificates or whatever else. I think it's fair to the taxpayer that we ask these people to pay up, because they are the major benefactors of these particular processes. Right now, we as Ontario taxpayers are subsidizing these particular industries to the tune of \$1 million a year. I think cost

recovery is a reasonable goal and will be supported by all members of the Legislature.

I want to thank the members of the Legislature for looking into this legislation. I want to indicate to you, Mr Speaker, and to the members of the Legislature that as the Minister of Environment, particularly as the new Minister of Environment, I do not profess to have anywhere near all the answers. I will listen with a keen ear to constructive suggestions. I have always maintained that position as a minister of the crown and will continue to do that in this post as the Minister of Environment.

The changes I have just outlined I believe will contribute to a more effective system of environmental protection in our province. They will help us make a more workable system that focuses on the results, on getting a cleaner environment, on doing something about our environment, and not focusing on an empty process. In short, we are creating a system governed by common sense and balance.

But I remind members that in the balance between the environment and the economy, when it comes down to the choices I must make as the environment minister, I will do my utmost to see that environment wins. Thank you very much.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I've listened carefully to the new Minister of Environment and wish to congratulate him on his new post. I found especially encouraging his remark that he is going to listen with an open ear.

I find it, however, somewhat ironic that in his new portfolio he is saying the municipalities should have the right to control odour, noise and dust. In his previous portfolio, as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, as we all know, he extended the drinking hours one extra hour, yet when Toronto residents wanted the right to stop some bars from keeping open an extra hour, he suggested that right could not be given to municipalities, simply because if one municipality opens another hour, all the traffic and movement would go into that municipality.

Now we ask him, the new Minister of Environment, what is more important? Is the environment not just as important as the decision he made under his previous portfolio? I would submit to you that giving the municipalities the right to control noise, odour and dust is of great and utmost importance to the residents of Ontario because, as he well knows, splitting up this responsibility will do not much for the environment. One municipality will say, "We don't have an odour problem here," and the other municipality will say, "We have an odour problem there," and consequently, where is the traffic going to flow? Where are the decisions going to be made? Where are the new companies going to open up their businesses? I submit that the minister should listen with an open ear.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I will be speaking later, after the table is set by my colleague from St Catharines on this bill, more substantively. What I would like to say to the minister in this two minutes is that I hope he is sincere when he says he is willing to listen and work with the opposition.

I want to tell him today that I don't know, and I'd like to hear him define, who these people are he's talking to

who are saying, "Let's roll up our sleeves and get down and actually protect the environment." Every environmentalist and people involved in that area whom I know — and I know a lot — many of whom have come down to speak at hearings on various bills which dismantle environmental protection, are saying, and I agree with them, that it's unprecedented environmental protection dismantlement going on here.

I also want to say to you, Minister, that what you're doing is not going to work. The people will not be fooled by it forever. You stand there and say, "We're essentially doing more with less." You are doing less with a lot less, a whole lot less. You have laid off so many people in that ministry and cut so deeply that even if you weren't gutting a lot of the regulations and rules, even if they were still all there, there'd be nobody there to enforce them. This is the reality that thinkers in this field out there are trying to tell you, tried to tell the previous minister, and I'm shocked today to hear you just picking up where the previous minister left off and trying to defend the deregulation that's going on.

Your government has set back environmental protection to pre-Liberal, pre-NDP and, in some cases, pre the previous Tory government. Minister, I urge you to listen carefully to the suggestions we have to make about this bill.

1540

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): First, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my colleague the Honourable Brenda Elliott for her foresight to see the need and recognize the need for a bill such as Bill 57, a bill which will be tidying up a couple of acts and particularly will be looking at standardized approvals.

The public are genuinely concerned about the environment and really want to see it improved, but I can tell you they're sincerely frustrated over the kinds of legislation that the previous governments had been bringing in and the kind of regulations they'd been bringing in, which actually do harm to the environment.

The previous government thought it was very important to get us all hung up in process and red tape. Ms Churley will recall one presenter on Bill 76 who went into great detail to explain to us how important it is to have process very complicated when you're trying to site landfills, so complicated that you wouldn't be able to site a landfill. Where are we going to end up if we cannot get a place to put the garbage? I would suggest maybe they should leave it right in their apartments if they don't want to have sound regulations to work with to bring them in.

I don't believe the previous governments really had a sincere interest in the environment. Their interest was in politics. They were out trying to sell the sizzle instead of the steak, and not trying to protect the environment as they should have been.

Ms Churley makes reference to dismantling a whole lot of regulations. Maybe a lot of them should be dismantled, with the kind of complicated red tape they brought in and put in when it wasn't protecting the environment. It may be a logical place for it to go. It seems the previous government believed that throwing money at every problem was the only answer. There are many answers you can come about with other than just throwing money at it, as you people were doing.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I was very interested in the minister's comments as we began this debate. One of the things I think we've all recognized over the past number of years, certainly in my constituency, is that approvals are a real problem and that there is a need for a streamlined system. We've all seen in our own constituencies hangups, things not happen that I think most people would have thought should have and that maybe caused some difficulties in the environment.

The problem, however, is that streamlining sounds well and good. The proof of whether it will work or not is in the regulations and what the government intends. What the government can't intend is not to have a full and complete airing of any potential concerns with an environmental problem. I say this also from the standpoint of the business community. Often the business community says: "Gee, I don't want to get all those approvals. I don't want to do this. I don't want to do that. We're good guys and we'll protect the environment." But I have at least two occasions in my constituency right now where people cannot do business, cannot develop property, cannot do what they need to do because the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment — and the municipality, for that matter — will not guarantee that they will enforce the environmental rules that exist. Because they can't enforce the environmental rules, they will not let the project go ahead, even though they believe it to be environmentally sound, provided it lives within those guidelines.

We're all concerned with the environment, but what you do has to be both environmentally sound and good for the economy, and I'm very concerned that may not happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the Minister of Environment.

Hon Mr Sterling: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I might add that I think you've done an excellent job in the last two days under extreme circumstances. I congratulate you on what you have done for us all. I'd vote for Bert any day.

I want to thank the members who participated in the brief response to my remarks. They pointed out a number of problems and a number of challenges we face in dealing with the issue of protecting our environment. What I will try to bring to the ministry and to the regulation role and to the approvals role and to the administration role is a degree of pragmatism and common sense as to how we deal with the balancing of the environmental and the economic interests of communities.

I will of course, as I mentioned in the last remarks, always be there in my role as the environment minister, and having to push that button will be the last button I will push in terms of the stance I might take.

I only say that as well it's difficult to divide up who should do what with regard to environmental regulation. The member for Parkdale mentioned the differing decisions we make in that regard, and that's a judgement call as to whether municipalities are better to make rules in certain circumstances or Ontario governments are willing to make rules, and we have our reasons for doing that.

I will try to put the decision-making down to whatever level of government makes the most sense. I will endeavor

our to reach those decisions, I would say, not deregulating but reforming the regulations which have grown in a topsy-turvy fashion in this province for the last 30 years. We are attempting to put them back in some cohesive form of order.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired. Further debate?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I would first of all like to take the opportunity to congratulate the new Minister of Environment, a long-term friend of mine. Both Mr Sterling and I were elected in 1977 in a very famous election, I think. His government was restored to minority status on that occasion. He and I have served and been interested in a number of issues where our views have coincided. Today is probably not one of those.

By the way, I should say this before I start, if I can get the indulgence of the House and the permission of the Progressive Conservative Party, may I split my time with Mr Ruprecht? Would you put that, Mr Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the wish of the House? Agreed? It's agreed.

Mr Bradley: Thank you kindly. I wanted to make sure that I got on the record first of all some of the hope I might have that the new minister may have some considerable clout in the government, also being a long-time friend of the Treasurer and the Premier of this province, and that he will be able to convert them to the ways of environmentalism, because he says when it comes down to fighting between the economy and the environment, as Minister of Environment he wishes to come down on the side of the environment. That's as it should be, and the opposition critic, the member for Ottawa South, who is now engaged in a leadership process and that's why I'm pinch-hitting today, will be watching carefully to see that the member for Carleton, the new Minister of Environment and Energy, will indeed be coming down on the side of the environment rather than the economy when the crunch comes.

I want to note that there was reference made to the previous Minister of Environment. I recall speaking in this House previously, saying that I could see a circumstance arising where the position of the previous Minister of Environment, the member for Guelph, would be a position that would be untenable. I could see that a substantial portion of the budget of the Ministry of Environment was being removed at the behest of the Premier and those who advise the Premier and the provincial Treasurer, now called the Minister of Finance. I knew that the previous minister, seeing her budget drastically reduced, the staffing levels reduced significantly and the clout of the ministry being eroded, would not be able to sustain the position as a result of that lack of support by her colleagues in cabinet and by those in the Office of the Premier and those who advise the government.

I hope that is not the case of the next minister, the new Minister of Environment. I hope the minister is provided with the appropriate resources that the previous minister did not have in terms of staffing levels, in terms of funds that are provided to him and in terms of the clout he might have in cabinet.

If you look at the legislation before us, Bill 57, the Ministry of Environment's Environmental Approvals Improvement Act — I think the government always disguises it with a name that makes it sound favourable to the people they want it to sound favourable to — you will find some areas where there are improvements that everybody will agree with. There are certain streamlining processes that are minor in nature but make some sense, upon reflection and upon new circumstances. Nobody in a reasonable sense is going to dig in his or her heels over some of those measures. However, taken in the context of this government's, I believe, lack of commitment to the environment, I think the environmentalists and others who have expressed concern about this legislation have a justified worry when they look at the general thrust of this government.

1550

If you recall the other day, some of us were paying tribute to John White, who was minister of many different portfolios in another government, and there he was as a Progressive Conservative — I can say progressive in this case, I guess — recommending land banking, that the government would purchase land and bank it for future purposes. Certainly that would be considered to be on the left of the Conservative Party today, if one were to advocate that. He also advocated a tax on energy to ensure that there would be energy conservation. He was ridiculed by some on that occasion, but if he were in the late 1980s, early 1990s, perhaps even today, some people might think that's progressive. Mr White did that in his position as the provincial Treasurer of the day. There were other measures he had advocated that were considered to be rather progressive.

Today this minister has the opportunity of having served in both the Progressive Conservative government and, if I may use the term, a regressive Conservative government, the present Reform Party of which he is now a part. I must say I preferred the previous one. I didn't say so during those days and I should have. I apologize today to those who sat — the member for Burlington South is here; the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who has a riding that has several names in it, is here. I apologize to them for, in those days, not paying tribute to the Progressive Conservative government of the day which, upon reflection, did not do a bad job, particularly compared to today. In some areas it did not do a bad job.

I want to be honest up front and say to the members of the government today that wasn't a bad government. If you were to emulate it in many ways, I think you would get more praise from the opposition. I know you crave that on a daily basis. I do express that. I wish the new minister well. I don't wish any minister ill will; I simply will be here to criticize when I feel they're doing an inappropriate job and be complimentary when they're doing an appropriate job.

I want to compliment the minister again in the early part of the remarks. He was the minister in charge, he was the minister who was Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, when the Niagara Escarpment Commission was established. Some members even on the government benches are quite supportive of the Niagara

Escarpment Commission. Not my friend the member for Lincoln, I don't think — I've heard some of his comments about it — but certainly other members. The member for Dufferin-Peel — I think it is the correct riding — has certainly been supportive over the years and I want to compliment him on that.

If there's one thing that I can say bodes well — there are a lot of things that don't bode well — it is the history of the member for Carleton in the field of the Niagara Escarpment. I know this gets into approvals, because approvals will be needed in various areas, even those which might concern the Niagara Escarpment.

I must say I was worried the other day when I noted in that wonderful newspaper, the *St Catharines Standard*, unfortunately now owned by Conrad Black, who owns most major newspapers in Canada, that the government had fired out the door many people who had served on the Niagara Escarpment Commission whose philosophy was to preserve the escarpment. There was a member, for instance, Joan Little from Burlington, who I think was highly recommended by members of all parties at one time. The member for Burlington South nods no.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): No. She supported our NDP mayor.

Mr Bradley: She apparently lost the confidence of the member for Burlington South, who may or may not have influenced her turfing as the chair of the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Hon Mr Sterling: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With regard to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, no one was turfed. Some members' terms came to an end. I just wanted to correct the —

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr Bradley: I appreciate, nevertheless, the minister's information. When a term comes to an end and a person has performed in an exemplary fashion, one usually expects that, regardless of the government in power, the person will be returned to that position, particularly if that person were dedicated to preserving the Niagara Escarpment, as I know the minister used to be in his previous incarnation.

I was a bit encouraged. People asked me, "What do you think of the member for Carleton" — Norm Sterling, as we know him in this House — "becoming the Minister of Environment?" I said: "At least I know he is committed to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. I am confident he will not appoint developers to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and those who would destroy its present structure." I still believe that to be the case. I'm looking for the people who are appointed to replace those who have been not reappointed, as he would prefer that I say, rather than turfed, but that remains to be seen. We have the government agencies committee where we will call those people forward to ask them their views.

That will be one measure. One measure of a minister is, who gets appointed to the agencies, boards and commissions under the jurisdiction of that ministry? We will watch carefully. I hope the minister chooses those with an environmental bent as opposed to those who would bend the environment, because that would certainly be advantageous to us.

The minister made reference to the OWMC and other things in this bill. It makes me recall some history of the spills bill that was passed in 1979 in this House with the support of all parties. The Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the NDP all supported the spills bill. Now, there were some who would contend that the government was dragged into it kicking and screaming. I'll be generous and say that perhaps it was in the progressive days of the Progressive Conservatives that they brought this about.

An interesting thing happened. You may remember, Mr Speaker, yourself, as the people of Mitchell and Stratford will remember, that the government did not proclaim the bill. They passed it in 1979 and refused to proclaim it. They were returned to a majority position in 1981 and the bill almost died somewhere. One of the first things I had to do when I was the minister was proclaim a bill passed by the Davis government that it had refused to proclaim. I hope the minister doesn't fall into that trap with some of the legislation he brings forward that I hope will be progressive.

Hon Cameron Jackson: What bills have you got that you want him to proclaim that were yours?

Mr Bradley: The member for Burlington South asks a question. Even though it's out of order, I will say that all the bills we wanted passed were passed because the House was very supportive of that legislation in the 1985 and 1987 regimes.

I want to go as well to the approvals process. If you ask the developer, the person who will show up at your fund-raiser, whether or not the process is streamlined enough, the developer will say no to you. If you ask some municipal politicians, some who believe that until every last piece of land is paved and every last development has taken place there's not progress, if you ask some of those individuals, they will say to you, "I think we need the changes you're contemplating." But if you talk to people who believe that it's wise to take some time to make these decisions — and that's, to me, what the word "conservative" means: to pause, to look first of all at what we have that's best and try to retain it, to pause and take our time when moving forward with decisions that will have ramifications for the whole province.

I have to note that I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing here. I don't want to misquote him, but I was quite alarmed when I read a report of a speech he had made in Ottawa where he said something such as, "We need more building cranes and fewer whooping cranes in Ontario." I think that's what you said; you were reported to have said that. If the minister indeed said that, and I didn't hear him say it and I have no way of knowing that he did say it, I would be alarmed. I hope if he was misreported that he will immediately call the newspaper and suggest that he was misquoted, because that would cause great consternation on this side of the House.

1600

I look at this bill in the context of the entire government attitude toward the environment. If I look on the government benches, I see no raving environmentalists, I can say that. I see some people who have expressed

concern about the environment over the years and I take at face value that they are concerned about it. But I see a lot of people who have dismissed the Ministry of Environment and Energy as a nuisance over the years, and that's most unfortunate.

I know there are people in all regimes, I will tell you, who aren't as supportive of Ministry of the Environment as they should be. I know the present minister, who carries considerable clout with the Premier, having been a long-time friend of his, and is indeed the dean of the government caucus, will surely have the influence to make positive environmental decisions.

But I look at this bill in the context of the entire attitude of the government caucus towards the environment and I find many members who have expressed annoyance and have indeed fought with the Ministry of the Environment over the years, over lack of approvals given or the time taken for approvals, and over the environmental assessment process and so on.

I want to say that when the minister looks through the legislation — I want to give him another compliment, by the way. He wanted to delay certain of his legislation — it wasn't this bill, it was the other bill, I think — until such time as he could deal with it. I think that was a wise move on his part that he delay that, not simply accept what had been there, but he wanted to look at it himself. I hope again that is a style we will see in the future.

I look at this bill in the context of the overall attitude to the government. You gave the member for Lincoln the opportunity — your government — to deregulate. The member for Lincoln and I agree on some issues, we disagree on some issues. I don't think that the kind of deregulation which was contemplated by the member for Lincoln and my view of what needs to be deregulated are necessarily coincidental; in fact I know them not to be. When I hear people who live along the escarpment or represent areas along the escarpment say we should get rid of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, for instance, and turn it over to the municipalities, I become very much alarmed, and I know the minister will resist that.

I know as well that members of the farming community have an interest in the approvals process. I'm glad that my friend Mr Villeneuve, the member for S-D-G & East Grenville, is a person who's looking carefully, for instance, at the issue of severances and has, to this point in time, I must say, decided he will be restrictive in this regard to protect valuable farmland. I know he will face considerable pressure from some of his colleagues, some of whom have been known over the years to grant severances in great numbers.

I know that he will be resistant to those suggestions by his colleagues, because that's an important part of the approvals process. I consider that as part of approvals. That's how I work it into this speech. I know you will want to do that, because there are people, as I say, in all political parties and at the municipal level and some in the industry who would want to see severance after severance.

I think the minister is wise to resist that. I know he will annoy some people, as I've annoyed some people, over that issue, but I think it's important for the preservation of agricultural land, and I urge him to continue to

take a stance which is small-c Conservative, that is, which will retain those valuable farm areas for farming well into the future, because environment suggests that we look into the future and not simply at the quick bucks that can be made with some fast development somewhere in the province.

When I think of some of the speeches I've heard in the past by the members of the government, I don't think we'll be seeing much in the way of legislation which is going to be annoying to business, because the Premier has said one of his primary concerns is to open Ontario to business. I think it's important, however, whether it's in the approvals or the assessment process, to know that there are businesses that want to see a good environment. My concern is that those businesses that have spent the time, effort and energy on training their employees appropriately, on making expenditures which will improve their operations, on avoiding producing contaminants for the air, the soil and the water, are going to be highly annoyed at a government that changes the rules so that their competitors who have not been environmentally responsible will be able to get away with rules and regulations and legislation of a less onerous nature. I know the minister will share my view on that, that this should not happen.

I'm not one of those people who looks out at the industrial sector or the business sector and says, "All of those people automatically want all the regulations and legislation removed and the enforcement reduced." They don't. The good people, the good operators, want tough and fair laws and tough and fair enforcement of the legislation and regulations. They can function well there; they can function with pride. It's those who are the sleazy operators or who want to make an easy buck who are the ones who are going to resist reasonable legislation and regulations on the part of the government.

I think you can make a judgement about a government as much by the resources and the clout it's prepared to devote to a ministry, whether it's so it can deal with the approvals process or not. When I look at the hundreds of millions of dollars which have been chopped from environmental endeavours in this government, I become extremely alarmed. In an earlier session I expressed concern for my friend the Minister of Agriculture when I saw his budget being reduced. Though he must in the House defend that, and appropriately as a member of the government he will, I know how difficult it would be for him to deal with reduced resources, just as I know the Minister of Environment will have difficulty doing that. I urge his colleagues in cabinet and caucus to ensure that the Minister of Environment has the appropriate staff to deal with this.

The Ministry of Environment was part of the gang, if I can put it that way, in the government that transferred to municipalities considerable powers under the planning process, and unfortunately did so at a time when municipalities, because of cutbacks in transfers to those municipalities, were cutting staff who would be designated to deal with various developments and proposals. The member for Middlesex, who sat on the committee with us — and I've said in the House before that I find this most unfortunate — is a professional planner, and he was

either silenced by his caucus or the cat had his tongue, one of the two, because he did not speak on these matters, and I thought he was the most appropriate person; I'd be very interested in what he had to say. I hope that kind of restraint has been taken off the government backbenchers so we can get that input, because I saw a transfer of a considerable number of powers that the Ministry of Environment and other ministries at the provincial level had to the local level, where they did not have the resources to deal with it, did not have the resources to turn over the proposals in a timely fashion without doing so in a shoddy fashion.

The member for Etobicoke West was a member of a municipal council, strongly supportive, I'm sure, of the Ministry of Environment in those days. I know he would want to see this approvals process not in a state where a nod and a wink was given to the proposals brought forward.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): No way, Jim.

Mr Bradley: He says, "No way," at this time. I understand, Mr Speaker, just as you are a candidate for Speaker — I hope I'm not announcing anything, but I think you will be a candidate for Speaker — I understand the member for Etobicoke West is, and I know all those who are candidates for Speaker are strong supporters of the environment.

1610

I want to deal with the tax cut and how it affects this legislation. If you ask, "How possibly, member for St Catharines, could you tie in the tax cut to this bill?" I can explain it very readily. The Ministry of Environment and other ministries of the government will not be able to do their jobs appropriately because they've had staff removed and resources removed. Why have they had them removed? Because the government, while it's running a huge deficit, is insisting upon having a tax cut.

We're paying for this tax cut in the quality of life in this province. It will be popular. When we get our cheques and we see we have to pay less tax, that's initially something we're enthusiastic about. But the Ministry of Environment is just one area where we're seeing the effect of that tax cut, in the reduction of the ability of the ministry to do its job. I contend that's one of the reasons we see this legislation before us, which would water down the approvals process, just as we see a companion bill that will be before the House again dealing with the environmental assessment process.

The certificate of approval process provided an important educational component for small businesses such as paint shops. We as a caucus are concerned that small businesses will not be adequately informed of the new environmental standards they are expected to meet. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Energy claims they will have to rely on already overstretched municipalities to educate industries and help monitor compliance.

That's where we get to the point, and I think the member for Parkdale made this point, that when you turn things over to municipalities you have to ensure they have the resources to deal with them. I'm convinced that when the Minister of Municipal Affairs is finished with them, they won't have any money left, because the poor Minister of Municipal Affairs is being cut back drasti-

cally by the Minister of Finance. I know the municipal affairs minister, because he knows municipalities, would like to be able to transfer adequate funds to municipalities, but the Treasurer of the province has said that shall not be the case and Tom Long has given the orders to the staff of the Premier that that not be the case. So they have to now — how do the farmers say it? — make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

I wonder what approval process will take place in Temagami. I think I'm safe to talk about Temagami right now; the member for Timiskaming is not here. The approval process there is rather interesting. We see in Temagami now huge chunks of old-growth pine forest that will be cut and new mining activities that will take place. I understand that some of the people who reside there and some in political office there are perhaps acquiescent to this. I don't know if the Ministry of Environment, with its chopped budget and chopped resources, will be able to deal with the approvals process there. I would love to see this retained as one of the real benefits we have in this province, and not simply get out the saws and start cutting down some of the nicest forests we have, the lungs of the earth, so to speak, an area envied by other countries. We have tourists come internationally to enjoy very passive recreational activities involved in that forested area.

I know a general philosophy has permeated this government that says enforcement isn't the way to go, that we should try the voluntary way of dealing with industries, with municipalities and with others who carry on activities that might in some way impact the environment in an adverse fashion. My experience has been that only tough laws that are fairly constructed — that is, with full consultation with everyone involved — and tough and fair enforcement is acceptable.

I remember, when we established the investigation and enforcement branch, that it was not particularly popular with some industries. In fact, I would arrive to visit an industry, and if the investigation and enforcement branch had been there at a previous time, particularly if it were recently, I would be told — they used an unfortunate name — "I see the Gestapo was here the other day." That's the way some of the industries reacted to the Ministry of the Environment investigations branch, because they thought they were so tough.

I thought that an unfortunate choice, but the point they were trying to make was that these people were there only to enforce the law; not to counsel us, not to suggest how we should be behaving, but to go in to investigate. If the necessary evidence was found, they would enforce. Let me tell you, that was very effective. The law that was brought about that said members of the board of directors of companies could be personally liable for environmental degradation caused by their companies ensured that they made certain that their companies were behaving in an environmentally desirable fashion. When you get into this approvals process, some of the people who were resistant to that have won the day.

I recall, even within the government of which I was a part, that there were some heated discussions over how long the approvals process took. I pointed out to those who thought it was an uncommonly long time that I

could point to several examples of where approvals were obtained quickly in years gone by and you could see the environmental results of that. I heard it mentioned by one of the members about landfills and how hard it is to site landfills, and indeed it is.

If there are ways which can be found to make the process better, maybe move along faster while at the same time being as stringent, there's nothing wrong with that. But I become suspicious, because I remember there are a lot of powder kegs out there, old landfill sites. The rural people can tell you. They're the people who have often been the victims, because their groundwater has been spoiled by old dump sites. You see, you don't go and put the dump site in the middle of somebody's city; you take it out in the middle of the agricultural land. That's what people do. They put it out there. The city garbage goes out in the agricultural land.

We want to ensure that when those sites are found there is an appropriate assessment of the site before it is approved. If you ease the approval process, you increase the chance that we're going to have some disastrous results many years down the line. That's my concern, because city folk have always felt that the countryside was the place they would like to see the dump site, and agricultural members here — who will, by the way, be fewer in number after the redistribution — will know the problems with fast approvals for landfill sites.

That's a concern I have, because those people will have less of a voice in this House after the redistribution takes place. This House will be reduced from 130 members to 103 members. Where will they come from? Why does it affect this bill? It affects this bill because those who represent agricultural areas will have less clout in this House, will have fewer opportunities to make known the concerns of the agricultural community. For that reason, we're liable to see more landfill sites approved that are detrimental to those in the farming community.

I looked at some of the approvals they talked about. When you're talking about a fan for a restaurant, if you said, "This restaurant can't open till it's got a fan, and by the way, you're on a waiting list of 200 days," or something, that would be unreasonable. There isn't anybody I talk to, environmentalists or non-environmentalists, who wouldn't say: "Look, make sense. Why not reduce that amount of time? Why don't we change that approval process?" No problem. You may have problems with neighbours once it's installed, because not everybody likes the odour of the food that's being cooked being blown out the door at their next-door residence, but that is of less significance to the environment than an approvals process which would allow for something that would be detrimental to an entire neighbourhood or an entire community.

1620

I know it sounds good. It's good talk when you get out there to the fund-raiser and all the developers are gathered around and they talk about the Ministry of Environment and so on. I know it's great talking points with them, to nod and say: "Yes, isn't it awful it takes this long? We'll fix it." But in the long run, you have to talk to the families of the developers — the spouses, the

children, particularly those who've gone through education and have become aware of the environmental consequences of some actions — before you think that speeding up the process in all cases is what should be done.

I saw another situation, speaking of approvals — and this directly affects approvals — written about by Mr Bob Hunter, who works for CITY-TV on the environmental beat and writes in a local newspaper as well. It says the following, and I think it's worth quoting into the record because it talks about approvals, which this House is going to be dealing with through this legislation. It's entitled "Eating Niagara."

"Well, new anti-environment minister Norm Sterling" — that's his comment, not mine — "hadn't even moved his furniture into the hapless Brenda Elliott's vacated office when the" — oh, I can't say this — "when the fur hit" — I'm just putting my own words in there, because it isn't exactly what it says in the article — "and it was the pits. Literally."

"Specifically, gravel pits. Gravel pits on the Niagara Escarpment. The sacred Niagara Escarpment itself."

"The Niagara Escarpment is one of only six places in all of Canada to be designated as a world biosphere reserve. The escarpment, home to 1,600-year-old dwarf trees, is a sweeping corridor of green space, vital among other things to the area's tourism industry. In its heart, however, several companies have been blasting away with heavy machinery at the otherwise bucolic plateau top."

"You really have to see these gravel pits to appreciate their scale. Not only are you looking down into a man-made Grand Canyon, but as the ground begins to shake and you hear the roar of a gigantic engine coming up from the depths, you suddenly remember what 'heavy machinery' means. It is called a 'quarry,' an innocuous enough word. Romantic, almost. But what it should rightfully be called is an open pit strip mine."

"Upon hearing that their business buddies in the aggregates industry were losing their battle to expand operations, the Tory government quietly posted a little regulatory change over the Environmental Bill of Rights electronic registry, an amendment under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act that would basically tear the guts out of the escarpment protection laws."

"The regulation would exempt aggregate companies licensed before 1975 from having to obtain permits from the escarpment commission, the legal defender of the zone. If it is successfully rammed through, more than 40 different aggregate companies will be able to go ahead, wreaking havoc."

"Did I mention that, after losing the two court cases, one of the big operators, United Aggregates, wrote to Brenda Elliott's office complaining about how hard life was? We don't know the exact contents because the minister's office won't release it. We do know that after receipt of the letter, the deregulation amendment was posted."

"The really cute plot point in all this turns on Elliott's vow, in the dying days of her ministry, that new province-wide deregulation measures would not, repeat NOT, apply to the Niagara Escarpment, an admission that the area was just too sensitive."

"Yet the truth is, while she was still at the helm, the decision was made to hand the aggregates industry a licence to do virtually what it wants.

"Which is where the new anti-environment minister comes in."

I repeat that I'm quoting Bob Hunter, not myself. I suspect, if I may editorialize, that it wasn't the decision of the minister but rather those who advise the Premier and others in the cabinet, who said, "This shall be it," and the minister simply had to comply.

"Which is where the new anti-environment minister comes in," it continues.

"The awkwardness for Norm Sterling is that, in a previous political incarnation as an MPP, he berated the Liberal government of David Peterson for cutting funding for the protection of the escarpment.

"Is he now going to give the aggregate industry carte blanche to chew its way farther into the tortured back of the plateau?

"He could, on the other hand, give the thumbs-down to this outrageous rollback of escarpment protection. He has the power.

"Or he can go the Brenda Elliott route: play ball according to whims of the Tory deal-makers; forget that his real job is to protect the environment, not set it up for a ripoff."

Now, that's Bob Hunter, and he is an ecology specialist for CITY-TV, writing.

I know that individual ministers don't make these decisions, which is why I have a lament for the previous minister and a concern for the present minister. I know they will face, despite the fact that they may try to protect the environment, undue pressure from their colleagues to make changes. But who has to take the flak for it when those changes are made? The minister who is the minister of the day. A person gets blamed by all and sundry, some in the news media, when in fact it is cabinet as a whole and the Premier's office who make those decisions and one can't attribute that to an individual minister.

This is talking about approvals. This is saying that in the Niagara Escarpment, where you had to get a licence from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, now you don't have to — that's the proposal — if you have grandfathered rights. I don't think that's good. I'm not saying that the government cannot entertain proposals; it's not what's said. I'm simply suggesting that it would be appropriate for everyone, regardless of whether they're already there or not, to obtain the licence that is required, to go through the process. If, after going through the process, it is approved, at least we'll know they've had to go through that process. I see, with this lessening of the approvals process by this government, that that's not going to happen.

Now it's environmentalists who will make the case, but down the line you're going to find that people are badly impacted. As I look at approvals taking place, I look at the Niagara Peninsula, represented now by six members and, after redistribution, by four and a half members — the clout of the Niagara Peninsula will have been reduced by one and a half members as a result of redistribution.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Who's that?

Mr Bradley: Well, the Hamilton-Wentworth municipality will take a large portion of one of the ridings, so it won't all be Niagara Peninsula ridings, to the Minister of Agriculture, who asked.

I look at the farm land that's there. Approvals deal a lot with farm land, and I mentioned severances already. One of the reasons the Niagara Peninsula is so pleasant an area is because it has a lot of agricultural area, has a lot of rural area that people can enjoy. But there are some people who believe progress will have been attained only when Metropolitan Toronto extends from its present borders right through to Fort Erie, and then they will nod and say, "Isn't that great progress?"

That's not a view I share. I think we have a unique resource there, both for agriculture and for tourism, which is enhanced by a large amount of rural land, and that we are not looking at progress when we develop every last inch of the Niagara Peninsula or any other part of this province.

But once it's developed, you don't undevelop it. Once the subdivisions are built where they shouldn't be built, you don't dig them up and take them away. Once factories that would most appropriately be put somewhere else are put on prime agricultural land, they're there forever and you can't recover that.

That's why it takes a forward-looking minister. The minister mentions to the House that he's both a lawyer and an engineer, and I congratulate him on that. That's a considerable accomplishment on his part, to be qualified both as a lawyer and as an engineer, and, I might say, as a parliamentarian as well. But that does not mean we're necessarily going to see environmentally positive decisions as a result of that. Indeed, some engineers see progress only when we're building, only when we're constructing, only when we're developing, and some lawyers act for people who want to develop. I'm not suggesting that's true of the present minister, but since he mentioned it in his initial remarks, I thought it important to note that that isn't necessarily a positive attribute for a Minister of Environment.

1630

I mentioned companion bills. If you want to look at the thrust in the environment so far, outside of one my friend the Minister of Agriculture has been involved in — that is, ethanol, which I think many people would consider to be a positive one, in combination with the federal government establishing an ethanol plan — if you look at most of what the government has done, it's stepping backwards. It's back to the 1950s that we're heading. In the environmental approvals process, we're stepping backwards on the environment. In the environmental assessment process, we're going back to the 1950s again, or at least to the 1960s if not to the 1950s. In the famous bully bill, as we called it in the opposition, Bill 26, which gave so many powers to the cabinet, to unelected people, we allowed changes to mining operations which I don't think were conducive for the environment. We threw that in with several other things, I might add, at that time. With the aggregates act changes — I think that bill is coming

back to the House as well — we made changes which I thought were not in the interests of the environment.

The Minister of Environment has a lot of backfilling to do, and he's good at that in this House. I've watched him over the years. But what he is really good at — and I want you, Mr Speaker, and members of the House to know what he is good at — is that if he can find one scintilla of evidence that the federal government might be somehow responsible in some remote way for something, the federal government will immediately get the blame when he believes it's appropriate, and he will be sure to take the credit when it's appropriate. I want to lay that out for people. When we're questioning him in the House later on, watch him as he blames the federal government for everything — well, virtually everything.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: You never did that.

Mr Bradley: No. I remember the Mulroney federal government well, and your predecessors, and I know some of them are now part of your caucus. I know that will permeate this government. Sometimes I can't recall these things, but I cannot recall that as a minister I would ever blame the federal government, or that our government did. But it may have happened; I don't want to preclude that possibility.

What I'm looking at is a situation where a minister has seen his government erode the environment and environmental progress since his time in office, and I want to see a reversal of that. I will be the first to commend him when he is successful in reversing that, but I suspect, with all the colleagues he has — outside of the Minister of Agriculture; he'd be sympathetic — who want to elbow aside the Ministry of Environment, the clout that ministry once had will certainly not be returned. The minister will have to nod acquiescently to his colleagues — or nod off, one of the two — in cabinet meetings when we are dealing with matters of great importance to the environment.

Paul Muldoon, an impartial voice on the environment, wrote this, upon finding out about this bill. "Tories Waging War on the Environment" is the title. I don't know who wrote the headline. I don't know if it's accurate. But I know it contained many concerns he wanted to express — and he's an impartial individual — about what the government was doing, and it was triggered by this bill. That's why I make reference to it. I'll read parts of it. It says:

"The government wants Ontarians to believe it wants to 'simplify' environmental laws and regulations, but in reality it is in the midst of an unprecedented campaign to dismantle them. The latest chapter of the campaign unfolded when the environment ministry recently issued a report called Responsive Environmental Protection.

"This document outlines the government's proposals to consolidate, amend or repeal the existing 80 regulations that control air and water pollution, waste management and pesticide controls.

"Some of the proposals may weed out obsolete provisions. But these gains are overshadowed by blatant and not-so-blatant attempts to reduce Ontario's environmental protection."

By the way, I should say that when you use titles such as you have in this bill, and a report called Respon-

sive Environmental Protection, it reminds me that everybody who's anti-environment has always used terms like "the Coalition for Environmental Responsibility." The Coalition for Environmental Responsibility was the chief lobbying group against the spills bill. It portrayed farmers as being totally opposed to the spills bill and portrayed itself as a rural coalition. Unfortunately, I found out that its headquarters was in downtown Toronto, in one of the tall buildings, and that those responsible were really those from the petrochemical industry who were annoyed with the potential of the spills bill. And so there we were, those individuals.

Now, I'm not talking about Gord Perks in this case. I'm sure he will offer an evaluation of your government at an appropriate time. Perhaps he's in Temagami at this time trying to save the old-growth forests that you're allowing to be cut.

Anyway, it says: "The document must be seen" — I'm continuing to quote from Paul Muldoon — "in the context of the government's environmental record. In a study released last June, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy documented the Tories' first year in office and concluded that efforts 'to amend or repeal environmental laws, regulations or policies... have affected virtually every aspect of environmental protection and natural resources management in the province.' The study lists more than 30 governmental changes affecting environmental protection." This again is a very objective group, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy.

"The now infamous omnibus bill amended a number of environmental statutes to relax cleanup requirements for mining, set the stage for the dismantling of conservation authorities and made it easier to overdevelop the province's lands and waterways.

"A new planning act stripped the environmental protection from land use controls. Changes to the province's basic Environmental Protection Act, in Bill 57, may exempt thousands of companies from going through approval proceedings. Proposed amendments to the Environmental Assessment Act would give the environment minister the discretion to relax requirements for full environmental assessment of new projects, even significant ones like landfills and incinerators.

"Apart from legislative changes," they go on to say, "the environment ministry's budget has been reduced by 35%, eliminating more than 750 jobs. Some of the most innovative and effective environmental programs in the province have been cut.

"The government says the Responsive Environmental Protection document merely seeks to further some of these legislative changes and to 'tidy up' regulations without lowering environmental standards. In fact, the 'tidying-up' will result in rollbacks of existing rules and put up additional hurdles to the development of new environmental regulations.

"The effect of the proposals includes:

"Removing reporting requirements for industrial polluters that may indicate whether their discharges might cause long-term harm.

"Removing requirements for pulp and paper makers to plan to eliminate certain toxic water emissions.

"Handing over responsibility for the control of odour, noise and dust to municipalities.

"Reducing requirements for companies to conduct audits and set goals for reducing packaging and other wastes.

"Removing requirements to obtain approvals for scrapyards, since rules governing them would be 'standardized,' and exempting other waste activities.

"Removing some permit requirements for pesticide applications and possibly requiring less public notification.

"In addition, the document would make it more difficult to enact new environmental regulations by proposing a 'regulatory code of practice.' The code will require a vague economic analysis of new regulations throwing into question whether, and how, the long-term benefits of environmental protection compare to short-term regulatory costs.

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"Further, the code will require an examination of 'non-regulatory' or voluntary measures. Voluntary measures can be considered the flip side of deregulation. As regulatory requirements are stripped away, they are replaced with voluntary commitments on the part of industry. Voluntary measures lack the vital protections found in regulatory measures to ensure that both governments and industry are accountable for their actions. It is difficult to enforce a voluntary agreement since compliance depends more on the goodwill of industry than the rule of law.

"Verification of results is always a problem and voluntary measures often operate without the benefit of direct input of the public.

"The people of Ontario should note what is happening to the green laws that protect them and their environment, and inform Mike Harris that his government actions lack common sense regarding both the environment and the economy."

Paul Muldoon is a lawyer with the Canadian Environmental Law Association. These are his objective evaluations of government activity, and part of the article was prompted by the movement of this bill before the Legislative Assembly by this minister.

I'm waiting to see the government come forward with positive environmental regulations, legislation and policies. I hear word that they're thinking of moving in the area of auto emissions. I await that, because I know British Columbia has been considerably ahead of us in this regard. Some of these matters are of a federal nature. The minister will certainly tell us which ones are at the appropriate time and will point fingers when he feels it is politically necessary to do so. But I want to encourage him in that regard to work with the other provinces and the federal government to ensure that emissions standards for automobiles are improved considerably. I know he will want to ensure that the vehicles on the road today perform in an environmentally positive manner, or at least not so negatively as many would see fit.

Part of this is impacting on another ministry. Your job, Mr Minister, is made more difficult because the Premier wants to cut back on grants to public transportation. As municipalities cut back in their public transportation services, we find a need for more individual vehicles on

the road at all times. That is most unfortunate because it will make the minister's job much more difficult.

The government has made a decision in Niagara with which I disagree. The government has given approval for Niagara College to locate outside of the city of St Catharines, what's called the St Catharines campus. I approved when the previous government of Bob Rae suggested the funding would be forthcoming to Niagara College; I support that adequate funding for the college. But I don't support — I didn't when Premier Rae announced it outside of St Catharines and I didn't agree with the latest announcement on the location.

The reason I mention that environmentally is that it means now services are going to have to be put out from one of the municipalities, probably St Catharines, to service it, and because of its location it will not have easy access from public transportation. Instead, individual vehicles will be heading out there and the Ministry of Environment's job becomes tougher, the Minister of Agriculture's job becomes tougher, because as people see development out there, they will want to see further development on adjacent land which is of agricultural benefit: good soils, great climatic conditions, particularly for the growing of tender fruit.

So when the minister is making his decisions, we have to understand it's not just the Minister of Environment. It's the Minister of Transportation and how he sees public transportation. It's the provincial Treasurer, the Minister of Finance, and how he's prepared to allocate funds; that's probably the most important position. And of course it's the commitment of the Premier to the environment. If those people are not supportive, I'll tell you, the Minister of Environment has a tough time, and there are other ministries as well that impact his ministry.

On the approvals process, I want to tell the minister there are some of these approvals with which we would agree. Some make some good sense. Many of them I'm very worried about.

If there's one issue that used to — and I think it will in the future — bring together people of all political backgrounds, it's the environment. I'm not talking about those with a vested interest in development; I'm talking about rank-and-file members of the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party. I think they want to see a good environment out there. The government has to resist the temptation to bow to the powerful interests, those who have a lot of money — I don't want to overemphasize this — those who attend fund-raisers because they have lots of money to attend fund-raisers, who have the ear of the government. Keep in mind the rank-and-file Conservative members, some of whom are good friends of mine in my part of the province and other parts of the province, who I think have a genuine concern about the environment. When you bring forward legislation of this kind — and Paul Muldoon mentioned five or six instances which are not good for the environment — it sends the wrong signal.

I'm not blaming the last minister. First of all, I don't like attacking people personally, and I didn't. I simply felt that minister was not going to get the support from the necessary people in the Premier's office, the cabinet and other significant places. The present minister, because

of his experience and stature in this House, will have more clout. He's a combative individual when he feels a strong passion about an issue. He has demonstrated that in this House and I'm sure within the confines of cabinet. I'm urging him, encouraging him and supporting him in any efforts he would make to resist further legislation of this kind, which I think is not good, in total, for the environment. To make some of the changes, yes; go out there and consult.

What the government can do, what the government does to make a case is it picks very isolated and extreme instances of silliness in the approvals process and says, "See, we need some substantial changes." I would agree with getting rid of some of the silly stuff, if it exists, but not with — to use a worn-out phrase — throwing the baby out with the bathwater when you do it. I become apprehensive when I see my friend the member for Lincoln rubbing his hands and hear him extolling the virtues of deregulation, which his committee was involved in. Regulations were established over the years not to be a nuisance to people; they were established to protect consumers, to protect people in our province.

There are people out there who will say, "Buyer beware." I think the lawyers use the term "caveat emptor" — I think that's the word that is used — buyer beware. Yet we brought in consumer legislation which helped protect consumers from unscrupulous business people. You know who supported that? The consumers supported it, but more importantly, good, honest business people supported that, because they would have none of that and yet they were faced with competitors who would do unscrupulous things to gain a better profit.

That's certainly true of the environment. As I mentioned previously, we have some good, sound, responsible environmental companies in this province. When I see the money they've spent, when I see the resources they've put in to protect the environment, when I see the training they've done of their employees, I'll tell you they deserve protection from those who aren't prepared to do the same, who aren't prepared to be strong and good corporate citizens.

So I say to all the members of the government caucus who are assembled in the House listening to this speech this afternoon, because I know they are all concerned — their concern is demonstrated by their attendance in the House today — that this bill, in total, is not a positive move. It's not a move in the right direction. There are certain aspects of it that are worthy of support, but many aspects that are not worthy of support.

In conclusion — and I did not want to take the full 90 minutes because I've saved some of the time for my colleague the member for Parkdale, who wishes to address some issues. The Minister of Environment, on behalf of the government, kindly consented along with the NDP to allow us to split the time.

1650

I say to the minister that I heard pragmatism and common sense mentioned, and I hope those words are not misused. I hope the words "responsible environment," "common-sense environment" and "reasonable environment" are not translated into actions which are detrimental to the protection of something that is not only for this

generation but for the next and the next and the next generations.

We have some considerable power, particularly those who are in the cabinet and in the Premier's office, but all members of the Legislature have certain power and responsibility, and that is to protect not only those of us who are here today but to protect the future for those who are to come, the youngsters who are out there today and their children and grandchildren.

Legislation of this kind and companion bills do not advance that cause, and so we in the Liberal Party will be opposing this legislation, because we believe it goes too far in watering down the approvals process. In fairness, we want to indicate some support, but in other ways not be prepared to give support. As the government members flock back into — sorry, are back into the House, many of them, some who are listening on their television sets acutely, others who are in committee, I urge them, particularly those who are not in the cabinet, to urge the Minister of Environment and other members of the cabinet to not come forward with pieces of legislation of this kind in the future, but rather to embark upon a course of progressive legislation and regulation which will protect our province and its environment now and well into the future.

Mr Ruprecht: I want to pay tribute to the member for St Catharines, because his words were very much thought out, and as he's been the former Minister of Environment, he knows full well of what he speaks. Of course, we appreciate that the present minister was in the House taking his time to listen carefully to what our colleague had to say previously. It would pay him well to heed some of his comments.

It will take the Minister of Environment a long time, obviously, to realize the full impact of his ministry. Of course, today we know that it will also take all the courage he can muster. Why is that? He will soon find out that many of his own colleagues will be influenced by other kinds of considerations and, I might even add, by some persons who have in their minds the whole development process to be changed, but it will take courage on his part because he stands up not only for the environment and for those who care deeply about the environment, but also for Mother Nature.

The air and the water and the animals don't have a voice. All combined will count on this minister to speak on their behalf. That's why it will take a great deal of courage, because he will represent not only those of us who care deeply about the environment — I know he will share some of these concerns — but also he has on his shoulders a great responsibility. That responsibility is obvious, because future generations will look upon this minister and will judge him on what he's done today. I know that the Premier — the member for St Catharines has already alluded to it — has chosen him because he believes he is a person of fair means and of a just mind. Our confidence today goes with him, and we hope he will abide by the trust that has been given him.

Now to the point: The environment ministry has recently issued a report called Responsive Environmental Protection. This report outlines the proposals to amend or repeal existing regulations which control, of course, air

and water pollution, waste management, pesticide controls and a whole number of other issues. Changes to the province's basic Environmental Protection Act in Bill 57, which is before us today, will exempt thousands of companies from going through approval proceedings. Proposed amendments to the Environmental Assessment Act would give the environment minister the discretion to relax requirements for full environmental assessment of new projects — even significant ones like landfill sites and incinerators.

Apart from these changes, the environment ministry's budget has been cut. The question we want to ask to the minister today is, is it true that the Ministry of Environment has lost over 750 jobs in the last year? Is that true? We expect from him today, in his response, to stand up and say what numbers have been decimated. What are they? Are there 1,000 employees who have lost their jobs, all of them committed to ensure that our environment is in good stead? Is it true that the budget of the Ministry of Environment has been reduced by over 35%, or is that simply a figure that someone drew out of the air?

The impact of a 35% cut and the impact of over 750 employees losing their jobs within the ministry must be great. What we expect today from the minister is not perhaps to justify the reductions of 750 people and a budget cut of 35%, but what does that mean? Does it mean we will do more with less, as part of the Common Sense Revolution proclaims? Is it true, and I'm asking the minister directly, that there are enough inspectors out there to ensure that toxic chemicals are not going into Lake Ontario and, for that matter, into the Great Lakes? If there are not enough inspectors out there, how is he considering to manage a ministry that has as its first preoccupation, and must have as its first preoccupation, to ensure that our environment is protected? Can he protect the environment of Ontario with a cut of 35%? Is that doing more with less? Less with more? That is a significant question the minister will have to answer.

We're here to help him. He must not think that all our actions here will be confrontational.

Hon Mr Sterling: You're here to help?

Mr Ruprecht: We're here to help you. We're here to help you simply because we have a certain amount of trust in you. We've known you for a long time. We know sometimes he stands up and ensures that the minority is being heard. This is a minority report. He has to represent the minority, but he's got this responsibility to ensure this province is protected.

Is this today a better province by this reduction? The Common Sense Revolution will tell us that yes, it's going to be better. Bill 57 is saying, "We'll do away with much of the overregulation." Obviously all of us here, as politicians, have various constituencies that all speak to us, but one of the most important constituencies of this minister will be those without a voice. As the member for St Catharines pointed out, that voice will not be in this House. That voice will not be at various meetings where we will raise funds. That voice will only be within the conscience of this minister. That voice will only be when he leaves this chamber and exposes himself to some of the decisions he will have to make.

1700

It is clear to us today that upon this minister, on his shoulders, rests a great responsibility indeed, and we do not want to mitigate that. He will have to understand that.

We say today that the rollbacks of existing rules he is proposing under Bill 57 — what are they? What is the significance of some of them? Of course, the favourite tactic has always been to set up a straw man, meaning you put up there some ridiculous notion of overregulation, you start shooting at that, and everyone will say, "Yes, sure, that is the case; we're being overregulated." But at the same time, when you talk about rollbacks, when you talk about cuts, when you talk about kicking people out from the environment ministry, you must also then look at what is being rolled back specifically.

What we're looking at here is that these proposals include removing reporting requirements for industrial polluters that may indicate whether their discharges might cause long-term harm. Another one is to remove the requirements for pulp and paper makers to plan to eliminate certain toxic water emissions — very serious charges, very serious rollbacks. Or handing over responsibility for the control of odour, noise and dust to municipalities, as I outlined earlier in my question to the minister. He is somewhat agreeable to the fact that there will be a great change.

Will the municipalities have the power to increase enforcement mechanisms? Will the municipalities have the will to ensure, with the budget cuts that have come from this government — and now we're loading even more responsibilities on the municipalities — that our environment is protected or, as in this case, will they simply throw up their hands and say, "We have not enough money, not enough funds to ensure our environment is being protected"?

Another rollback is reducing requirements for companies to conduct audits and set goals for reducing packaging and other wastes; or removing requirements to obtain approvals for scrapyards, since rules governing them would be standardized, and exempting other waste activities; or removing some permit requirements for pesticide applicants, and possibly requiring less public notification. If some of these are not rollbacks, then what are rollbacks? What are we talking about here? People have to look at these specifically.

In addition, the minister proposed what's called a regulatory code of practice which will require an examination of non-regulatory or voluntary measures, and we know what that means. In a Toronto Star article by Paul Muldoon, which we referred to previously, he says very aptly that if we leave voluntary measures to industry alone, can they be trusted?

We know what happened in Parkdale a few years ago. I go back to 1981 when the now minister was in this House. In 1981, in an area called the Junction Triangle, we saw first hand what some of these voluntary measures were and we saw first hand how some of these companies can be trusted.

We know full well, for example, that if you say to a company, "We expect of you to fully comply with voluntary measures," what will they do? Will they instruct their employees to say: "We've got a toxic chemical here.

We've got three or four litres left over. What do we do with the waste? Do we dump it down the sewer or do we call a contractor who will charge us hundreds of dollars, in fact thousands of dollars, to get rid of this toxic waste?" What's the decision going to be of the president of that company? We know what some of the decisions were. They were, "Dump it down the sewers." That was the decision made. We saw it first hand.

I went into a company in the Junction Triangle and I saw first hand the crates that were being washed with toxic chemicals, then the water that was applied later went right down the sewer. That toxic chemical ends up where, when it goes through the sewer? It ends up in Lake Ontario, where we take our drinking water from. In fact, we're being affected by it every day.

So when we talk about voluntary compliance, we know that is not going to work for all the companies. Some companies which may be on the brink of bankruptcy are not going to call in a special service to get rid of chemicals or process them. We know that's not the case. I was very, very happy when in 1982 the then Minister of the Environment said, "We're going to listen to the residents of Metro Toronto and not burn PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls, within the city of Toronto." That was after the decision was made, in fact, to start to consider burning PCBs within the cities of Ontario. Can you imagine that? We didn't have the right technology for burning PCBs, and yet that was under active consideration by the Ministry of the Environment, to give permits for burning PCBs.

We know PCBs are indeed very, very dangerous chemicals, and the whole burning process has been placed on hold simply because we don't know what the consequences of that burning will be. But in those days it was considered to burn it right within the city boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto. At that time too, the Minister of the Environment listened to some of the residents and said: "No, we're going to be looking at the burning process in much more detail. We're going to decide to hold off on the burning." Today, of course, we're happy that this process was not taking place. Today, of course, there's burning in Swan Hills in the province of Alberta and they're looking at new burning technologies, but we know what some of the consequences were. On Friday afternoons, when some of the workers wanted to go home, what was primarily in their minds? Their minds were made up what they were going to do on the weekends, so "Push some more PCBs into the incinerators and to hell with some of the regulations."

But we don't wish to dwell on these specific items, because today we're looking at Bill 57 and the rollbacks in some of the regulations. "Voluntary measures lack the vital protections" that we find today in the regulatory measures "to ensure that both governments and industry are accountable for their actions." That's the conclusion that Paul Muldoon comes to. When we look at all the specifics and we look at the whole bill, that's the conclusion we come to as well.

So what this minister and this government must look at is the social cost of environmental degradation. That's specific. What is the social cost of air pollutants? We know what happens in the city of Toronto. Some days the

radio will say, "Hold on, residents of Toronto. Don't go out today. Don't breathe the air today," because if you do breathe the air in the city of Toronto on special days, you're going to have a dire consequence. "Warning, warning, warning. Don't breathe today. Don't go out today, because our pollutants are in the air."

You've heard the warning, I've heard the warning, and sometimes the consequence of that is death to some of our residents simply because they went out on those smoggy days and had to take a breath. The social cost of environmental deregulation, of environmental degradation, must be included in the decisions that are being made.

It's the same with smoking. We know there are great social costs attached. We know that many smokers end up in hospitals and that consequently the cost to the taxpayer is great.

1710

Should we then not consequently look as well to the social cost of environmental degradation? I, for one, would not like to see another warning in the city of Toronto that says: "Hold off. Don't go outside today, because if you do you're going to have dire consequences to your health." That, to me as a Canadian, is unacceptable. I know that wherever you come from, whatever city you represent, whatever town you come from in Ontario, it's obvious that you would not wish that kind of a warning to come through your town council or have that on the radio waves.

Today, we're playing with fire. Are we giving Mother Nature a chance to replenish itself? Are we doing that? We know when we look at the Great Lakes that literally there are millions of tonnes of toxic waste spewed into the Great Lakes. We know that today. All the governments surrounding the Great Lakes know there's a crisis. The governors in the United States from the states surrounding the Great Lakes are calling a special meeting. The committee studying the Great Lakes, which obviously is part Canadian and part American, is calling this an environmental crisis.

Ontario, which has more border along the Great Lakes shoreline than any state in the United States, has a special responsibility as well. Our responsibility is to ensure that we will have the waters clean, and yet where are the alarm bells in this House? Where is the government on this issue? Where are the members who stand up and say, "Look, we've got to maintain a pure, clean environment, especially within the Great Lakes region, in the Great Lakes basin." We know there's a crisis, and yet who speaks out? A minority. That's why this minister has a special task to perform. He's the Minister of Environment and, as I said earlier, upon his shoulders rests this responsibility.

Finally, as my time will expire shortly, let me simply ask this question: What legacy are we leaving our children? Are they going to be able to swim in Lake Ontario? Think about it. In the west end of Toronto we had a wonderful beach called Sunnyside. Sunnyside Beach, for the last few years, has not been swimmable, never mind drinkable; you can't get in there and drink the water because you'll get sick and might die. Can our children go to Sunnyside Beach and swim today? No, the

bacterial count would be too high. Why wouldn't that be a good, clean beach? Because we in this government, in this Legislature, have not called this a crisis and have not funded it especially or specifically.

Does Mother Nature have time to replenish itself? If we look at those beaches within the city of Toronto, we can see environmental degradation at its worst. The question then should be: What are you and what are we prepared to do about it? Are we here simply to say to some of our industry, "There's nothing we can do," or are we able to go and look at the lake ourselves? Are we living in a cocoon here?

Obviously we can't get out there and see every environmental problem people are calling us on, but certainly we should get out to the lakes and see at first hand what's happening to (1) our drinking water, (2) the fish we catch in Lake Ontario and (3) the blue heron, the different animals that call Lake Ontario their home. What's happening? We take the fish out and we see chemical changes in the fish. Fish being at the end of the cycle, we see that their mouths or their tails are deformed, and consequently, because of chemical intake, they will never be able to reproduce correctly.

We're playing with fire today and we have a responsibility. That's why we're here today to support this minister, because we believe, all politics aside, that there's got to be some cooperation, because this is a crisis. It is a crisis of politics because there isn't enough funding.

That's why today I'd like to ask this minister, has he sent his inspectors out to the polluted beaches of Lake Ontario — or wherever you come from? Each one of us, every one of us, has a crisis of the environment in our own riding. If you look hard enough, you'll find it. In fact you don't even have to look hard enough. I can just walk down to Sunnyside Beach and I can see the crisis in my own area. I can walk up to the Junction Triangle and see another crisis staring me in the eye. I just walk down here out of this building and I see it occasionally. So all of us have to cooperate and work together.

Finally, let me simply say this. Those who speak for the environment — and you say, "There are some radicals and they're demonstrating occasionally, and we don't know what Greenpeace is doing here and there, and there are some other people who seem to be crazy," but in the end we only have one environment. That's it. If we screw it up, and we're in the process of doing it, we're never going to be able to get it back. It's not a question of saying, "Today we're going to have some more salmon in there, the salmon are going to come back, and we can see the fish are going back to Lake Ontario." No, it isn't quite like that, because there are millions of species that are in danger today.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for being indulgent, and I wish the new minister well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Questions or comments?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): It is with interest that I listened to the comments made by both of the members from the opposition party, and I've got to concur.

The point that I think is interesting and telling is that the government is saying, when it comes to gutting environmental regulation, what they're really doing here is cutting red tape, what they're really doing is trying to make it easier for businesses to operate in this province — not small businesses, I would add, but large multinational corporations in this province. They're going to make it easier for them, they're going to cut red tape. Boy, it's going to be a lot easier to get through that approvals process. Just you wait. The benefits will reel into the province of Ontario and we're just going to be so well off it's going to be unbelievable.

Then at the same time the government has the gall to say: "Don't worry. The environment will be protected. We're going to do this economic development and at the same time that we reap the benefits of the economic side of this, the environment is going to be okay. Everything will be fine. Don't worry. Trust us." But why is it that in this legislation the government is exempting itself from any liability for its actions? That's what they're doing in this legislation if you take a look at the fine print.

The government can't have it both ways. They can't say, "We're going to exempt ourselves from liability against environmental disasters in our bill to make sure that we don't get sued in the event that that happens," and at the same time turn around and say to the people of this province: "We're doing this. This is good stuff economically. It's only readjusting. It's only red tape issues and the environment's going to be good."

If you thought, as a government, that the environment was not going to be affected, that the environment was going to be protected, that in the end we were sure we weren't going to have some wholesale destruction within the environment of this province of Ontario, you would have not put in a clause that says you're exempting yourself from any financial or other liabilities in regard to this matter.

I say to you it is fairly cynical what you're doing. Come clean. What you're doing is you're giving the power to the large corporations to do what the heck they want at the expense of the environment.

Hon Mr Sterling: I would like to thank the speakers for taking the time and effort to put forward their views with regard to Bill 57 on a whole number and range of issues on the environment, including the odd comment about the Niagara Escarpment Commission and myself, which the member for St Catharines has mentioned a few times before in this House.

I want to say with regard to the last speaker, he's way off base in terms of his interpretation of the liability clause. This kind of clause is quite common in legislation, has been there in previous legislations by previous governments, and quite frankly is put there to prevent interests from wasting taxpayers' money in defending useless lawsuits. That exactly happens.

Mr Bisson: Imagine them standing up for the environment. What a waste of taxpayers' dollars.

Hon Mr Sterling: Well, we'll be able to discuss the details of the bill in the committee.

I'd like to indicate to the members that I've listened to all the debate so far and I will continue to listen to the debate in trying to improve this bill. I do hope they will

offer particular constructive suggestions as to how this legislation can be altered and can be improved, because that's what they're here for. I get a little bit less comfortable as people harp about old problems and old biases and those kinds of things.

1720

I'm glad to see the member for Algoma-Manitoulin agree with me, at least in a nod, that we have had these regulations growing topsy-turvy over 30 years. We have to look at revamping them, and that's what this whole process is about; we have to improve this process. I invite the members to join me in doing that.

Mr Michael A. Brown: I'm certainly glad that the Minister of Environment has chosen to talk about 30 years of regulation. I think that's fair. There have been 30 years of regulation and they do need to be reviewed. The problem I have, of course, is do we get the result that we really need to get? We need to have a proper review of the regulations, one of the things this government has not permitted to be happening. Those things happen behind closed cabinet doors, and it seems to me that for the minister to have some credibility on these issues the regulations have to be put out into the public domain so the public can be assured that what the minister is saying is in fact the truth.

As I look at the honourable member for Carleton's past quotes — June 27, 1990: "The Liberal government is spending something like 112% more in its Ministry of Environment budget than it did in 1985. I have no problem with the Minister of Environment asking for two or three times that budget if that is what he needs to address the issue." And just so you know, in 1990-91 the budget was \$537 million. Now we have the minister working with a budget of \$373 million.

The minister was rather selective in quoting me, but what he didn't seem to understand is that no regulation and no process is worth anything if you cannot enforce it. The enforcement capacity of this ministry has got to the point that I think Ontario should be concerned about its water quality, Ontario should be concerned about its air quality, and certainly Ontarians should be very concerned about the future of their children in this province.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the speech by my Liberal colleagues, because they have tried to name very clearly what some of the problems are in this bill. It's fine for the government to try yet again to portray itself as solving problems that have been there, cutting red tape, making it more easy for citizens to understand and for businesses to operate; that's the line they're using on this and many of the other changes they're making.

But the reality is that they are fundamentally, as the member suggested, changing the whole relationship of the ability of the government of Ontario to ensure for its citizens that the environment is safe. They are basically writing a blank cheque to those who are would-be polluters. They are saying in this bill that once they've notified the public — and the public has 30 days to make comment — they can exempt any class of businesses.

I live right next door to a dry cleaner, all right? And I can see the day, because I know that dry cleaners have

been very reluctant to follow the environmental rules that have been put in place — I can well see the day that dry cleaners will apply for an exemption as a class of businesses under this act. I can assure the member that my experience is not much different from other members of this House. We will be watching all of those circumstances over time, and if, as we suggest, what you are doing here is giving polluters the right to make the rules, to write their own rules and enforce their own rules, it will be a very, very serious matter for the future of Ontario and, I would suggest, for the future of your government.

The Acting Speaker: The member for St Catharines, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr Bradley: I appreciate the remarks that have been made by members of all parties.

I think an interesting dwelling point of the minister was on liability and who may have access to the courts and to the opportunity to take environmental action. You see, as the government withdraws, as the government reduces its staff, as you go into the local offices of the ministry and find fewer people who are able to enforce the laws of the province in terms of the mandate of the Ministry of Environment, the more you're going to need individuals to take up that action and afford opportunities for individuals to take up that action. If that is restricted by any new legislation, we'll have a reduced action on the part of both the public and the government in terms of the ability to deal with tough environmental issues.

I also believe some of the tough measures that were put into effect in terms of the fine levels and the jail sentences and other penalties that are available for people who pollute were put in to protect the general public and to protect industries.

The minister asks for us to make suggestions on how the legislation can be improved, and that is where the role and responsibility of individuals come in in committee. I know our party will want to make those suggestions on what parts of the bill should be withdrawn, which should be amended, and perhaps some additions to the bill to strengthen it, because ultimately the government, with its 82 members, is going to be able to pass this legislation. I certainly respect that. That's a decision of the electorate of this province, and I will be the first one to say the government is entitled to do that. I simply hope the minister will listen to our representations and those of many others who have appeared before committees and who have expressed views in writing.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Mr Speaker, I ask for the indulgence of the House —

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Would the member take his seat for a moment. Is there unanimous consent for the minister to make a statement? Agreed.

Hon David Johnson: — to inform the members how it's proposed to deal with the procedural issues raised by the pending resignation of Speaker McLean on September 26. I would note that the following has been discussed

with and endorsed by the House leaders of the other parties.

Tomorrow morning, during the time normally used for private members' public business, we propose holding an election of the Speaker under the following terms and conditions:

(1) The parties have agreed to put forward only one candidate for the position. That candidate shall be installed as Speaker pursuant to standing order 3(c).

(2) The candidate will indicate at the time he or she takes office that they're assuming the office for a period of one week only and will not be campaigning for the position of Speaker on a permanent basis.

(3) The election of a permanent Speaker will be held next Thursday morning, October 3, during the time normally used for private members' public business.

It is the view of the House leaders that this process will allow those members interested in seeking the Speaker position sufficient time to consult with their fellow members and, I might add, their families and other interested parties, while ensuring that the business of the House proceeds in an orderly manner consistent with the provisions of the standing orders and the Legislative Assembly Act.

I believe this process has the support of all parties.

1730

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS
IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996
LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION
DU PROCESSUS D'AUTORISATION
ENVIRONNEMENTALE
(continued)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): We will now continue on the debate. Further debate on Bill 57?

Ms Churley: I will speak briefly today and continue tomorrow. I appreciate the Minister of Environment coming to tell me that he does have to leave soon but has agreed to stay for a few minutes. I'm sure he will carefully read Hansard or watch my speech on TV late tonight in the rerun.

I want, first of all, to say to the member for Carleton East, who is in the Chair now, and to the member for Perth that I appreciate the fact this is a difficult time because we're short a Speaker, and that they have very kindly allowed me, because I'm the critic in this area, to not take the Chair today. I recognize the sacrifice that's been made by both of you, given that we should all be taking a shift, and I am sure you will make me pay you back for that. Anyway, thank you very much.

I would say to the Minister of Environment, I said earlier today in a statement that I congratulated you, and I sincerely do and I wish you well. I listened carefully to what you said in your speech today and I mentioned in a two-minute rebuttal that I was disappointed because I was hoping we would see in you, the new Minister of Environment, a new direction, and that's not what came out today. You opened your speech with, "Congratulations to the previous minister, good job, good leadership, and I'm going to just keep going where you left off."

That to me is problematic because what I have been saying and what many environmentalists, in fact all the environmentalists across the province — and not just environmentalists, but many in the media and others — have been saying for some time now is that the deregulation and cuts that are happening in your ministry are unprecedented in the history of environmental protection in Ontario, which started with a Conservative government.

There are a couple of things that have already happened that have got me worried. One is your statement today about this bill. I hope, and I will be requesting through the House leaders, that you will agree to hearings on this bill because at first, given the other very fundamentally important bills that are out there, as you know — I forget the numbers — like the EA, the changes to the environmental assessment and the so-called responsive environmental protection, which I have another name for that you'll hear later — this one, at first blush, until you read between the lines, seems like it might be innocuous.

There are those who say that if taken out of context, if all of these other serious deregulation steps had not already been taken, it would still be a problem. There are many elements within this bill we're debating today, Bill 57, that are problematic, but when you put it together with the litany of other cuts and deregulation that already have happened or are about to happen, we have a very serious problem indeed. I'm disappointed that the minister did not say today, because this was an opportunity, that he too would like to see some changes made. I would say to the minister that there are some changes that needed to be made. I'm not going to dwell too much on those because those are the ones, the innocuous ones that the minister seems to dwell on most and not so much on the more serious ones.

Another issue that concerns me greatly is the Niagara Escarpment. The member from St Catharines talked at great length about that. The minister may recall on August 19, just before he became the minister, I believe, that much to people's amazement there appeared on the environmental registry that there was going to be a regulation removed protecting the Niagara Escarpment.

This was two weeks after the government announced its blueprint for environmental deregulation and the gutting of environmental protection in Ontario, but there was no mention of significant regulatory change here. What's happened is that — I know with your long-standing commitment to the Niagara Escarpment you must have concerns about this — your government changed a regulation to accommodate apparently the request of United Aggregates that recently lost not one but two court decisions requiring it to obtain a development permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission for the new activity. That has implications as well for all of those who were producers before 1975. They will no longer require the NEC's permission to expand their activity.

We talked briefly on the phone when the minister called me — which I much appreciated, I might add — to discuss the delay of the clause-by-clause on the EA bill. I'm looking forward to having some discussions

about changes that need to be made there, but I'm surprised that we have not heard anything from the minister yet, particularly with his background, on the Niagara Escarpment and this very dangerous backward step in terms of moving this regulation. I think it will bode very badly for the new minister, a very bad start, if he doesn't convince his cabinet caucus that his reputation is on the line if this is not changed.

There can be no justification. It is not just red tape. It is not just regulatory. This kind of activity in the Niagara Escarpment, which as you know has been designated by the United Nations as a world biosphere reserve — it is not just an insignificant piece of land. With a few exceptions in this House —

Mr Galt: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, under section 23(b)(i): We are debating Bill 57, and we're discussing the Niagara Escarpment Commission. I wonder if we could get on topic.

The Acting Speaker: I cannot rule that you're right because I was not listening. I trust your word; you're an honourable gentleman. I promise you that I will pay more attention.

Ms Churley: I reject the parliamentary assistant's position on this. It goes to show in other debates, and we've had this little kerfuffle before, that he doesn't understand the environmental issues. These are all connected, as I said. Mr Bradley from St Catharines stood up and spoke at length about the whole breadth of environmental issues, and for some reason the member didn't stand on his feet then. I would argue that perhaps a precedent has already been set today by the member for St Catharines speaking about the whole picture, which I'm sure the Minister of Environment would not object to. In fact, one cannot talk about this bill without talking about the other aspects, because they are all interconnected. There are no boundaries to the environment, and that's both literally and figuratively.

Coming back to my point that this is about deregulation, that is what we're talking about in regard to Bill 57, that is what we're talking about when I talk about the Niagara Escarpment, that is what I'm talking about when I talk about the Responsive Environmental Protection document and others. It's all deregulation; you cannot isolate this small bill out.

Having said that, I very much hope to hear an announcement from the minister. As I said, his reputation is very much on the line; a very bad start if he doesn't repeal that regulation.

I'd like to thank the minister for staying for that part and I look forward to discussing some of these issues with him later.

I want to put into perspective today, and later tomorrow I'm going to go into more comprehensive details about the bill — and it's not just my perspective; it's the perspective of environmentalists, environmental lawyers, experts in environmental policy and law and regulation, who have grave fears about this bill and are worried about its implications. I want to put this whole issue in context, and we must not forget this: Remember Bill 26 and remember that this government wants to give a 30% tax cut. May I add again that we all know by now that the richest in our society are going to benefit from that tax cut.

1740

How does this government find the money to give this kind of massive tax cut when they're also trying to reduce the deficit? They do it by making cuts across the board. Now we all know that the major savings to be found are in education, in health and in social services. We have seen and are seeing very serious cuts in education that are going to have massive impacts on the classroom, despite what it said in the Common Sense Revolution document.

However, coming back to the Ministry of Environment, because I admit I got a little bit off topic there for a second, the government needs to find every single penny it can wring out of every ministry, and as the member for St Catharines said earlier today, there is not a huge commitment to environmental protection from this government.

I believe the member for Northumberland, the parliamentary assistant, means well. We have sat on committees together and we have had serious discussions about the environmental deregulation going on. I guess what's a little scary to me, because he is an honourable man, is that he actually does believe it. It amazes me, but he actually believes it. I think there are some of them over there who know better. I mean, give me a break. It's about time that you start at least telling people the reality of what's going on here.

They have cut from the Ministry of Environment almost 800 staff, in a very small ministry, and cut more than \$200 million, with more to come. They're starting to look foolish. They're starting to look very foolish and ridiculous to keep repeating — I mean nobody is going to keep on believing this — that they're actually improving environmental protection.

I think more and more — I'm trying to speak to you, Mr Speaker — they're going to start finding that the polls show people want their government to protect the environment. I know that's what the spin doctors who helped write these wonderful titles — I have to admit I congratulate them on their titles. They're better at titles than the New Democratic Party was, I think, but we were honest about our titles. These titles do not, and I'm speaking carefully, describe the contents of these bills.

It's important that people be told what is really happening. Why won't the Minister of Environment stand up — instead of saying: "Oh, we're not hurting the environment. Au contraire, we're improving environmental protection." Who is going to believe that after a while? I think it has been taking a while for people to catch on, but daily there are more and more stories in the press about the lack of environmental protection and the deregulation and the cuts that are going on and that people want their environment protected. I think it would serve everybody well for the government just to be up front about that, to say: "We can't afford to protect the environment the way other governments have. We have to do our tax cut. We were elected on our tax cut. Therefore, we have to save money, so we're going to cut environmental protection. Sorry, but that's part of it." Just be honest. That way at least people know where they stand.

There's a lot of spin-doctoring going on here. There's a lot of very — how should I put it? — not quite correct

titles to these documents, and some of them are very technical. The document before us today can get very technical in places, but once you read through it, it's not that difficult to understand the implication. It doesn't matter what the Minister of Environment says today and what the previous Minister of Environment said; there is serious environmental deregulation going on, and that's happening for a number of reasons.

You've got to ask who's benefiting from this deregulation? Who is benefiting? It's not the people of Ontario, who want a clean environment. It's not our children and our grandchildren and other generations who are going to have to pay with their health and the cleanup of the mess that's going to be left behind. It's not just the general population. It's the corporate polluters. They were asked, "If you could wave a magic wand, what regulations would you like removed?" That's a statement in itself, and the government listened to a lot of requests from the polluters. It is big corporations that are benefiting from this deregulation and the cuts, and that's saying to people, "You can now write your own rules."

Nobody is objecting to cutting red tape when it's unnecessary and to tightening up the process and making it more efficient. I get angry when I keep hearing those words over and over again that have nothing to do with cutting red tape, and it is fooling the people to say, "Oh, don't worry, cutting this regulation is actually going to help protect the environment." That's ridiculous.

The government will be able to tell whole categories of businesses, "Do anything you like," and that comes through this bill and this bill and all the other bills and changes in regulation that have either come before us or that we don't even know about. It's basically saying, "You won't get caught; we don't have the staff to catch you any more with the few regulations that are left." This bill and the practice it represents is a threat to our communities, to our health and to our jobs.

The government members protest and say: "We're only cutting red tape. We're letting business do what it does well, create jobs, create wealth without all the bureaucracy. Let's get government out of our face so we can just keep creating all these jobs and helping the economy." They're doing that by slashing the ministry by a third so they can save the money to help pay for the tax cut. I can give you just one example, and I'll be giving you more.

It is not safe with a government that has already told mining companies that they don't have to get approval of mine closure plans from the ministry any more. That happened way back with Bill 26. It's not safe with a government that is gutting the Environmental Assessment Act, tearing the very heart out of the Environmental Assessment Act. That's what's happening, and we'll be having further debates on the EA. We did have hearings and we'll be coming back before the House, and I hope very much that the minister will listen to the environmentalists and others out there who are very concerned about these changes.

The legislation must be taken in the context of all that's happened to date in the environment and deregulation. If you don't look at this bill in the context of all the other deregulation and cuts, if you take one piece over

here, you've got a problem because you have to look at the cumulative effects of these cuts and changes because they all interact with each other. For instance, a large part of the bill we're debating today is talked about in this document as well, Responsive Environmental Protection. I'll wait and get into that tomorrow, when I have more time. What I'm going to do now is talk a bit about putting into context why this bill is in some cases almost catastrophic if it goes ahead.

The government to date, and I'm going to name some, has withdrawn Ontario's ban on the construction of new garbage incinerators. Some people think that's fair, that's the way it should be, "Let EAs take care of whether or not it's the best and most viable solution." Now, on top of that, the EA act is threatened to be gutted and there could very well not be a proper EA to site an incinerator or the ability to look at alternatives to that. The problems, with the ban on incinerators, have been doubled now.

The government killed the successful green communities program. This created all kinds of jobs, I'd like to add. Not only did it help immensely with energy conservation, and people save money by getting energy conservation devices in their homes, but it created jobs in communities. Of course, as we well know, this program as well was put in partly to combat greenhouse gases, which is a very serious problem. But the cancellation of this initiative will cost thousands of direct and indirect jobs across Ontario; that's cutting off your nose to spite your face.

It terminated funding for the popular blue box program and it also eliminated funding for other waste, 3Rs, the reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives.

It slashed the funding to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and I am going to be counting on the minister to put back that funding, given his commitment, or his previous commitment, to the Niagara Escarpment. Of course, we're very concerned now, as is the member for St Catharines, who talked about, who is going to replace the environmentally conscious people who were on the board and are now gone? We'll be looking at that with interest.

1750

It eliminated funding for municipal household hazardous waste programs. This program was designed to keep toxic materials out of landfills. Again, I'll be talking more about this government getting rid of the hazardous waste programs that our government started to put in place, after the cancellation of the OWMC. That's all gone and that's a very serious problem.

It killed the CURB, the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. We know what happened in Collingwood recently. There are other — I had a list, I forget how many, but a series of communities across Ontario in rural areas that could be threatened, and this was part of a program to keep our lakes and rivers and streams free of pollution.

It also weakened numerous clean water regulations under the municipal-industrial strategy for abatement program. That means more pollution in our lakes and rivers. That's what it means. There's already too much going in, and this government has moved in the opposite direction; it's going to let them put more in. It began the dismantlement of the Ontario Environmental Bill of

Rights. Again, coming back directly to this bill before us today, it is moving even further away with the new regime under the class acts, with people not having to apply for any kind of certificate of approval, and means that there will even be less involvement. So that's being dismantled even more.

The government dismantled environmental safeguards under the Planning Act. Believe me, I sat through the hearings on that, and we've talked about this in the House. I urge people to go back and read the Hansard and read that bill again and see how serious the environmental deregulation in that bill is. The effect it's going to have, long term, on our land use planning is going to be just devastating. The only hope we have, and I believe it's quite possible, is that we will have the Tories turfed out of here in four years and not a lot of development will have happened on some of those lands that have had the very important environmental protections relaxed or taken away, and it can be saved. Of course, developers don't like uncertainty and I think that's a danger this government took when it decided to go so far. Even pre-NDP and pre-Sewell commission stuff, it went back pre-Bill Davis, some of it. It's ridiculous.

It also killed the Ontario Waste Management Corp — I talked about that — and the province's hazardous waste reduction strategy, eliminated grants for environmental research. That creates jobs. It puts us in the leading edge of environmental technology.

It slashed funding to the Environmental Appeal Board and to the Ontario conservation authorities by 70%. They're going to be threatened now. They may end up having to sell valuable land that's actually been donated to conserve. It slashed funding to the Ontario Energy Board, fired the environmentalists from the Ontario Hydro board — they did get back through a court order — disbanded the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee, eliminated the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, killed the Municipal-Industrial Strategy for Abatement Advisory Committee and then immediately after saying, "We don't need them any more, we have reached our objectives in MISA." It's just like the Niagara Escarpment thing: Get rid of the committee, announce they're not needed, "We've reached our goals," and then, as soon as they're gone, actually, after killing the committee, lower the standards. That's what happened here.

It terminated the Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards, refused the local option to protect local air quality. That had a huge impact on me and my riding. Remember that? The government actually refused to enable the city of Toronto to implement a clean air bylaw. I couldn't believe that, because in that case it was just a municipality, the city of Toronto, which has a very serious smog problem, which is why I agitated day after day to the previous environment minister to bring in a car exhaust testing program. And this government, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is here, said no. It's absurd. It wasn't going to cost them anything. It couldn't hurt them.

Who told the Minister of Municipal Affairs to say no? Why would they care about that? Ah, he's perked up. He's listening now. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is here, I'm happy to see. To the minister, I'm talking about the fact that you refused to pass legislation to enable the city of Toronto to implement a clean air bylaw. Why would you do that? What's the big problem? You wouldn't have to pay for it, enforce it or do anything. Who in the world would have asked this minister and this government to not allow that clean air bill to be passed?

It also conducted a regulatory review of environmental regulations with a view of dismantling them. I've got a story to tell, and maybe I'll take a few minutes to tell this now, because it's very telling.

We kept hearing for months and months and months that all departments in all the ministries were being asked to look at ways to cut red tape. I asked the previous Minister of Environment one day in the House what role she played in the setting of the terms of reference for that, and she said none. It really shows, in this package right here, who had the upper hand in where they cut. This is not smart environmental deregulation. This is not about cutting red tape.

The story to tell is that Paul Muldoon, who's been mentioned frequently here in the House today by several members, is a respected environmental lawyer who knows environmental regulation inside out and seriously understands the implications and the broad connections and cumulative effects, the kinds of things we're talking about here. He tried to get the technical background papers for this document for months before it came out. They wouldn't give it to him. Finally, he filed through freedom of information, and it took quite a long time. Finally, through his persistence — and I congratulate him on that. I think it was 600 pages or so of background technical documents.

Well, guess what he found? He found that in many of the recommendations from the staff at the Ministry of Environment in certain areas — and I believe MISA was one of them — the technical staff who deal with these issues daily, yearly, said: "We think this program is working well; no need to change it. In fact, we recommend not changing it." But this government chose to ignore the advice of some of its very experienced staff.

What does that tell us? Who are they listening to? Not to the general public, not even to some of their very experienced technical staff. You have to ask who they are listening to and why they would go ahead with certain regulations which they believe, in my view, from what I saw, could actually harm the environment. Or it's a regulation that's working well — why change it?

I will stop at that point today and will continue tomorrow debating this bill.

It being almost 6 of the clock, I move that the House be adjourned.

The Acting Speaker: It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Thursday 26 September 1996

Jeudi 26 septembre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Ed Doyle

Président
L'honorable Ed Doyle

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 September 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 septembre 1996

The House met at 1001.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): Members of the assembly, it is my duty to inform you of a vacancy in the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario due to resignation. It is therefore my duty to call upon you to elect one of your numbers to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Therefore, I ask for nominations for the office of Speaker.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I, Jim Bradley, move, seconded by Bud Wildman, that Ed Doyle, member for the electoral district of Wentworth East, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Is there a seconder for this motion?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I second the motion.

Clerk of the House: Does the member accept the nomination?

Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East): I do; reluctantly, but I do.

Clerk of the House: Are there any further nominations?

I therefore declare Mr Ed Doyle, member for the electoral district of Wentworth East, elected as your Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): I just want to say this is an incredible honour and I thank you all. It will be short, but I will do my best. I really thank you very much. You're all so kind.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me. If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the assembly, whose servant I am.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the assembly to Her Majesty's person and government and is confident that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance and prudence.

Prayers.

Hon David Johnson: I move that this House now adjourn until 1:30 pm.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of this House that we adjourn until 1:30? Agreed.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1331.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Mr Speaker, I'd like to welcome you to the chair.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr Agostino: Yesterday evening, the Hamilton District Injured Workers Group held a forum attended by about 200 injured workers. The forum invitation was issued to all six Hamilton area MPPs as well as the minister, the former minister in charge of the WCB and other government members. Unfortunately, the only two who chose to attend and speak to the injured workers were myself and the member for Hamilton Centre. None of the four Tory members in the Hamilton area, the minister's office, the former minister involved or any of their parliamentary assistants saw fit to come and face the injured workers who are going to be affected by the draconian changes to the Workers' Compensation Act and health and safety across Ontario.

Many of these individuals were concerned about the benefits being cut; the deindexing of pensions for workers; the wait period, which has been changed; and the ongoing attack against injured workers by this government, day in and day out. These individuals last night were truly concerned and were looking for answers from the government members. Unfortunately, what we saw was an empty chair and no one from the government side of the House having the guts or the courage to face those injured workers.

I issue a challenge again to the local MPPs, the minister and the former minister: Next time you're invited, have the guts and the courage to come and face those injured workers in Hamilton-Wentworth whom your decisions are brutalizing and injuring more every single day of the week.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Mr Speaker, let me add my voice to those who congratulate you on your short but none the less accelerated ascension to the Speaker's chair. I'm sure you'll do an honourable job there. I particularly welcome you as a fellow Hamilton-Wentworth resident.

The Speaker: I appreciate it.

Mr Christopherson: I rise also to comment on the meeting last night that I attended along with my colleague the member for Hamilton East regarding the changes to the WCB. If any of the Tories had been there or if the minister or the former junior minister had been there, they would have recognized that this nonsense they talk about the fact they're going to improve workers' compensation is just that — a lot of nonsense. The only people who are going to gain are their corporate friends.

They intend to cut the benefits to disabled workers, and somehow workers who are injured on the job don't qualify as fully disabled. This government promised not to hurt disabled citizens, but somehow workers injured on the job don't count. They're fair game; you can go after them. You're going to cut their benefits by 5% and give that 5% as a break in premiums to your corporate friends, and that's disgusting. You're going to privatize parts of the WCB. You're going to put employers in charge of deciding in the first instance whether or not these are bona fide claims.

This government needs to be on notice: When you bring out that legislation, you'd better get out there into public hearings. If you're listening, perhaps you'll do the right thing and withdraw, really make changes that help workers and stop attacking workers.

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): Mr Speaker, again, congratulations on your election to the Speaker's chair.

I rose in my place about one year ago, and in fact you may remember, to tell this Legislature and the people of Ontario that my community, the city of Brantford, had won the national Communities in Bloom competition.

Since then we have moved on. We have moved on to compete against the world and as recently as about a week ago, my community, the city of Brantford, was awarded the international competition championship for Communities in Bloom competition.

I want to say that there are a number of people in my community who deserve a great deal of thanks for making us world champions and I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their contributions, whether they be organizers of the event locally or the individual residents who came together to make us world champions. Of course, they deserve a great deal of congratulations.

I also want to tell the people of this Legislature and the people of Ontario that when you come to Brantford and when you come to visit our community, you are visiting what is now considered to be, and is recognized as, the most beautiful community in the world.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Mr Speaker, welcome to the chair.

Yesterday I stood to speak about the issue of the doctor shortage in my community. It's becoming worse as we go day by day, in particular, the issue with obstetricians. We have many women who are pregnant, who are in need of prenatal care, who are in need of delivery services in the very next few short months.

When we brought this to the attention of the House — and we've been doing this for several months — we have yet to have any reasonable attempt by the Minister of Health to address this most significant problem. Yesterday, in fact, the minister spoke with reporters from the Windsor Star and today on the front page of my paper in my community the minister says that he's prepared to declare a state of emergency in Essex county.

May I please suggest to the minister that we already have a state of emergency. What does a state of emergency

mean? Does he call in the army? Does he call in the navy? Are these people going to be the ones who are helping with the delivery of babies and the provision of prenatal care?

Let me tell you what else the minister said to our reporters from the Windsor Star, "But if it is an absolute emergency, they can pop across the river." I've got to say to the minister, have you ever been to the city of Windsor? Do you know what it's like to pop across the river? Was he being facetious?

He's also said that he's prepared. "We are supplying cell phones, pagers and fax machines to the officials." Is this going to help in the delivery of babies? I think not.

Mr Minister, please take this issue seriously. He must address and find a solution.

WALK FOR AIDS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I would like to bring to the attention of the Legislature an event which is taking place this Sunday in Toronto. It is the seventh annual AIDS Walk Toronto.

AIDS Walk Toronto is part of AIDS Walk Canada, a national fund-raising and awareness project for the Canadian AIDS Society. All funds raised in this Toronto walk will go to benefit AIDS service groups in Metropolitan Toronto.

Last year, over 18,000 people participated in the walk. At that time, the walk was called "From All Walks of Life." It's a fitting name because the walk brings together people from all walks of life to fight this terrible disease which affects people from all walks of life.

Registration for the walk begins at 10 o'clock at the Toronto city hall in my riding and passes through the neighbouring ridings of St Andrew-St Patrick and St George-St David. I hope to see the members of those particular ridings come that day.

As in previous years, I will be participating in this year's walk and I would like to invite other members of this House to join me as part of my team, to support the cause by a pledge or to participate in the walks in their own ridings.

I want to congratulate the AIDS Committee of Toronto and all of the volunteers who have helped to organize this year's walk. It's a good cause and one which I hope you will all support.

1340

COMMUNITY AUTO THEFT REDUCTION

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): It's a pleasure to see you in the chair, Mr Speaker.

Auto theft has become a major problem across this province and it's costing millions of dollars to insurance companies and ultimately to the consumer. Last year in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth alone, over 5,000 vehicles were stolen. Some 76% of these thefts were committed by youths aged 12 to 17 for the purpose of joyriding.

I rise today to bring to the attention of the House a new initiative launched by the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police. The Community Auto Theft Reduction project, or CAR project, has launched a major public

service announcement aimed at youths aged 12 to 17, containing a very strong message called "Scared you straight."

The CAR project has received funding for the public service announcement campaign from the General Accident Insurance Co of Canada. The campaign will consist of public service announcements, both video and audio, and will be aired on both radio and television throughout southern Ontario for a period of 13 weeks.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved with this very worthwhile campaign. It's another prime example of private and public sector working in partnership to accomplish very worthwhile objectives. I encourage other municipalities to follow the lead of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police and look forward to similar projects to combat car theft.

PREMIER'S VISIT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Mr Speaker, welcome to the chair.

The people of Sudbury were surprised to learn they had received a one-week reprieve from Mike Harris's health care budget axe. Last Tuesday was supposed to have been the day Mike Harris's handpicked Health Services Restructuring Commission announced which of Sudbury's hospitals would have their doors locked forever. But to everyone's surprise, the announcement was abruptly cancelled, delayed for one week. People hoped the delay was a sign that Mike Harris had had second thoughts on breaking his promise not to close hospitals. They hoped Mike Harris had realized his cuts were jeopardizing quality health care in Sudbury and across northern Ontario.

Unfortunately, the reason for the delay was only because Mike Harris was coming to Sudbury — not to save our hospitals, but to attend a Conservative Party fund-raiser tomorrow at \$150 a plate. The hospital closing announcement was delayed simply because Mike Harris didn't have the courage to face the people of Sudbury and defend his decision to close our hospitals.

The Premier can try to avoid facing the damage by delaying the announcement, but the damage he is causing will be with us for a long time and the people of Sudbury have long memories. They will remember Mike Harris as the person who came to dinner, closed their hospitals, and didn't have the courage to take responsibility for it. Bon appétit, Mr Premier.

HOSPITAL SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The member for London — my apologies. I knew it was London, but I wasn't sure which one. The Chair recognizes the member for London Centre.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you for agreeing to take the Chair.

Last winter, as the justice committee travelled around the province looking at health consent issues and substitute decision-making legislation, we heard from many in the disabled community that they feel they are subjected to prejudicial views on the part of health care professionals around the issue of "do not resuscitate" orders,

whether those are in terms of emergency rooms, in expected surgeries or medical conditions which we would not normally consider to be life-threatening.

Given the recent issues that were raised in the Tracey Latimer case, where a parent of a disabled person killed her because of his assumptions concerning the quality of her life, this matter is of urgent concern to disabled people in this community. Indeed, we heard in an article in the Toronto Star on Monday of this week that these concerns have not yet been allayed.

In my community, I'm meeting with the hospital CEOs and with the ethics committees at our hospitals to ensure that "do not resuscitate" orders are not inappropriately applied to disabled people. I would urge other members of this Legislature to work with the disabled community in their own locales and ensure that their hospitals and health care professionals are responding appropriately to this concern.

MUSKOKA AUTUMN STUDIO TOUR

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I'd like to extend an open invitation to all Ontarians to this weekend's Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour in my Muskoka-Georgian Bay riding. Our part of central Ontario has become home for a diverse community of artists, artisans and crafts people who have set up small businesses and become entrepreneurs selling their own works.

The studio tour provides an opportunity for visitors to get inside crafts people's studios and homes and watch them at work. The tour gives visitors the freedom to choose the artisans they're interested in. By starting in Huntsville in the north or Gravenhurst in the south, a number of different routes can be taken to visit any of the 23 participating crafts people, who include painters, canoe makers, sculptors and cabinetmakers.

This annual event also gives local artists an opportunity to have contact with the people who enjoy and admire their work. The visitors are always interested in watching and sometimes participating in the artist's creative process.

The studio tour is a big boost for the local economy, as it allows vacationers the opportunity to spend the weekend at a number of world-class resorts in the area and experience Muskoka-Georgian Bay's many wonderful attractions.

So, this weekend, visit cottage country and experience Muskoka-Georgian Bay's rugged landscape, beautiful scenery and fine artistry.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a Cuban delegation attending the Canada-Cuba Solidarity Conference of 1996. I would ask that you please join us in welcoming them here today.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): I have also been advised by the table that they would like the members to

retain the election-of-the-Speaker kits that were placed in their desks this morning so that they may be used next Thursday in the election process. We all understand why we need that election process, don't we? I think we found that out rather quickly.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The point of order relates to the number of ministers who are available to answer questions in the House today. The chief government whip was kind enough to inform me in a timely fashion that a number of ministers would be absent and would not be here to answer questions. We look forward to the opportunity to have those questions answered, and so I would like to register with you my complaint about the lack of ministers.

The Speaker: I hate to get difficult on my first day, but it is not a point of order.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I'm not trying to be difficult but pose you with the same point of order. I am in the position of expecting both the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education and Training to be present; neither is in their chair as question period begins. I'm wondering if you could ascertain whether they will be here shortly. In their absence, I assume, unfortunately, I may have to stand down my lead questions.

The Speaker: I will see if I can get the answer to that question. Shall we stand down the leadoff questions for the time being? If you would be patient for another moment or two, the minister will be here.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): As I indicated, my first question will be for the Minister of Education or of educational destruction, which is more likely the case. I have a question for you that a Thunder Bay constituent would like you to answer today.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is no such minister. I would request that the speaker on the other side address the cabinet ministers in a proper manner.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): I wonder if the member for Port Arthur could address the minister by his proper ministry, please.

Mrs McLeod: It is the member for Fort William. I did in fact address the minister as the Minister of Education; quite clearly, he is not a minister for education. I'll use the correct terminology.

I come back to the fact that I have a constituent who wants a very direct answer from him on behalf of her child. The constituent is Mrs Rizzi. Mrs Rizzi has a child with a learning disability. Her child is receiving some special education support, but for a good part of the day this child is in a grade 8 classroom with 41 students. Mrs Rizzi has spoken out today about what she thinks of your education cuts. She doesn't believe that classrooms with 40 students are manageable, period. They are certainly

not good places for students with learning disabilities, and there are three special-needs students in this class of 41. Do you agree with Mrs Rizzi that this is completely unacceptable and do you understand that this is indeed the state of education in Mike Harris's Ontario today?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for clarifying the title of the ministry and the minister. I think that's appropriate and I'm sure her example will be used by all members of the House.

I'm sure the honourable member knows I cannot and will not talk about an individual case in this chamber. However, if she has information about an individual case or concern about some person's treatment in a school system in Ontario, I'd be more than happy to entertain it, if she'd send it over, and we will make a response.

I can again assure the Leader of the Opposition that our reductions last year, our request to school boards to reduce the expenditures to have a more affordable education system in Ontario, amount to 1.8% of the grants for education in the province. It's a system that spends almost \$14 billion, and so I'm sure, as I'm sure most people in the province are sure, that a 1.8% reduction in expenditures should not result in a lack of services in the classroom. I would find any lack of services in the classroom certainly repugnant to myself and all of my colleagues.

Mrs McLeod: I don't think Mrs Rizzi is going to accept that answer. I think she'll realize it isn't going to help her son much. Knowing the details of her case is obviously not going to get much of a response from you. I think Mrs Rizzi knows very well that the cuts you have made in education are hurting children in the classroom. They are most certainly hurting her son. It's important for you to understand that children who have special needs are in classrooms, and when children with special needs can't get the support they need to learn, your cuts have hurt the classroom. Mrs Rizzi is just one example. We can flood you with others.

I have another constituent, Mrs Gliddon. Her son is in a wheelchair and needs special education support. She's afraid there will not be enough special education support for her son to stay in the classroom at all this year. She would like you to know that the cuts are hurting her son. It's not just situations in the Lakehead Board of Education or in Thunder Bay. Those happen to be two that have been in my office recently. If you want to go to Brant county, they have cut 12.5% from the special education in their secondary schools, so there are going to be students in Brant county facing the same kinds of impossible situations that Mrs Gliddon's son and Mrs Rizzi's son are facing in Thunder Bay. How can you possibly continue to deny that your cuts have hurt classroom education and are hurting kids?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I want to again inform the Leader of the Opposition that I, of course, can't comment on individual cases in this chamber. I would be more than happy to entertain those individual cases if she would send them over to me.

I can also again assure her that we have every reason to believe that the requests we have to find savings amounting to 1.8% should not have an effect on the

classroom and most certainly should not have an effect on the services provided to those young people in Ontario who are most in need. If those circumstances are happening, it points to very poor choice-making at the level of service delivery, and we would certainly address that.

I also want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that we have said over the course of the last 15 months that we recognize that the general legislative grant system in the province of Ontario is not fair, and that we intend to change it, and that we intend to have funding for education that's designed to meet the identifiable student needs. We believe in funding students and not in funding systems, and that is why we are undergoing the redress of problems in our funding of education that have existed in this province for a very long period of time, including the time the Leader of the Opposition's government was in power. We are finally redressing those very serious concerns.

Mrs McLeod: It is not a question of poor choice-making on the part of school boards, and I say again it is not just the Lakehead board, it is every board in this province that is facing absolutely impossible choices because of the cuts this minister and this government have made to education. If he wants to take the specifics of the case — Mrs Rizzi has already phoned his office today to make him aware of the specifics of the case — he might also want to look at the realities of the budget of the Lakehead Board of Education. He might want to find that the administrative costs of the Lakehead board are well under any targets he has set for reasonable administrative costs for a board of education. They have nowhere else to go.

That's what's happening in the real world, not only in the Lakehead board but right across this province, and parents like Mrs Rizzi and Mrs Gliddon and hundreds of other parents of special-needs kids know that's what's happening in the real world. The only one who doesn't understand is this minister who lives in an Alice in Wonderland world where \$400 million in cuts somehow makes things look better.

On Tuesday, I asked whether or not you were seriously contemplating even further cuts, millions of dollars in more cuts to education this year, as much as \$600 million. You did not deny that when I asked you that question directly on Tuesday. You apparently did deny it yesterday. I think it's time for you to stop playing your Alice in Wonderland games with children's education. I want you to tell us today, to give us a guarantee, that you are going to abandon your plans to cut millions of dollars more out of education when your cuts have already devastated classrooms and are hurting kids.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that her words today have been heard. I think she has made a great case for what we have been saying for over the last year, and that is that the funding system for education in Ontario must be reformed, must be changed, and we are up to that change, although the previous two governments were not up to making that substantive fundamental change to our education system in Ontario.

I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that my efforts and the efforts of my colleagues over the next 12

months will be the same as they have been over the past 12 months, and that is to make sure the people of Ontario have a more affordable, a more accountable, and most importantly, a higher quality system of education than they had before this government took office, and I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that in fact will be the case.

Mrs McLeod: I can only wish the Minister of Education would stop talking nonsense and visit a classroom where these kids are really feeling the effect of his cuts.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I will place my second question to the minister in charge of closing hospitals. A few days ago you were quoted as saying that hospital restructuring in Winnipeg was giving better service, more surgeries and greater access. Well, that may be Winnipeg, but I can tell you that here in the province of Ontario under your direction the results of your so-called restructuring is chaos and confusion and fear and anger and less access to health care and poorer quality health care in communities across the province.

You will surely be aware now that yesterday the entire town of Wiarton virtually shut down as 3,000 people gathered to protest the impact that your \$1.3-billion cuts to hospitals is going to have on their community. They are desperately afraid that your cuts are going to result in the closing of several hospitals, including Wiarton Hospital, and you will know that Wiarton Hospital was built just two years ago after the community raised \$4 million.

Minister, as the sole person with the power to sign death warrants for Ontario's hospitals, a power that you asked for and that you now have, will you today assure the people of Wiarton that you will not close their community hospital?

1400

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The Minister of Health.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I don't think it was to the Minister of Health, Mr Speaker.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, we have no minister on this side of the floor as titled by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker: I wonder if you could readdress the question to the —

Mrs McLeod: I certainly will, Mr Speaker. If there is no minister by that title, there is certainly a minister responsible for closing hospitals. I will place my question to the Minister of Health, who holds that responsibility.

Hon Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker, I didn't pay a lot of attention to the question because I didn't think it was to me.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: I have no comment, as is the policy of this government, with respect to the development or the contents of a district health council report while that report is being produced by the local community. As I've said in this House and outside of this chamber, not only

during my entire time as Minister of Health but during my entire time as health critic, it is improper for politicians at this level to interfere in the development of local communities' plans for their health care systems, and I will not budge from that position.

Mrs McLeod: When this minister isn't trying to bully his way through health care, he is denying any responsibility for what he is directly responsible for. That includes the closing of hospitals and it includes the \$1.3-billion cut that's forcing communities like Wiarton to be looking at the closure of their community hospitals.

Minister, I want you to keep looking at the reality, because you can't deny your responsibility for it. I want you to look at what you're doing in Kitchener — just one more example, Kitchener — where your funding cuts have so starved St Mary's hospital that the board is now considering closing their hospital within three years. They simply don't believe that your cuts will allow them to offer quality health care and allow them to stay open and provide health care to people in their community. The closure of this hospital has nothing to do with delivering better care or creating more access. The closure of this hospital, like the potential closure of the Wiarton Hospital, has everything to do with your \$1.3-billion cut to hospitals. You know it and the public knows it, and even members of your own caucus know it.

I have here a letter written by one of your colleagues, a letter written by Mr Wettlaufer, the MPP for Kitchener. This is a letter he wrote to you yesterday. In talking about the closure of St Mary's General Hospital, he says:

"The argument justifying this decision was that it was a 'win-win' decision, mutually agreed upon and supported by the district health council. However" — and I hope you are paying attention at this point, Minister — "I am advised that it was prompted by the threat of an \$18-million cutback in funding to the hospitals in our region."

Will you admit that your colleague Mr Wettlaufer, the MPP for Kitchener, concerned about health care in his area, is right, and that the closure of his hospital is being driven by your \$1.3-billion funding cut to hospitals?

Hon Mr Wilson: Let me quote from Murray Elston, Minister of Health, Hansard, October 12, 1986: "The object of the amalgamation is to streamline their administration and produce savings, which the hospital plans to use to improve" —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. A little more decorum, please, and if there isn't going to be decorum, please try to do it from your own seats. Thank you.

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, I won't comment on the development of local plans by local communities. People deserve our respect with respect to their autonomy to make those decisions. The government made it very clear when Mr Eves made the announcement last year that \$1.3 billion will come out of the hospital side of the ledger and be reinvested in community savings. Our first reinvestment of that money, without actually having seen the money yet from hospitals, was \$170 million into new community services, to service 80,000 to 100,000 more seniors and people who need community services and create 4,400 new jobs for nurses, homemakers and other health care providers in community settings.

Is the honourable member suggesting that we freeze the hospital budgets, allow them all to drive to mediocrity so there's no excellence any more but 219 hospitals that can't operate properly? Or should we set up an arm's-length commission to take the politics out of this, create centres of excellence in each community and make sure that the people of that community, the patients, can receive the full range of services they're entitled to, including community services?

The member's party announced the \$647 million for community services. The NDP announced the \$647 million for community services. You forgot to flow a lot of that money. We found that money. We fronted it with a \$300-million increase in the budget to health care this year. We're putting the services in place where they ought to be: in the community. If the member is suggesting that we should reverse this entire plan, which is agreed to by health experts and, up to this point, by all three parties, I'd like to hear the honourable member be very clear about what exactly she's driving at.

Mrs McLeod: I trust the minister is not even attempting to suggest that taking \$1.3 billion out of the budgets of our hospitals is somehow going to prevent mediocrity and lead them to excellence. That is the fundamental stupidity of what he has done to hospitals and to hospital planning. You can't take \$1.3 billion out of the hospitals, starve them into closure and expect to be able to provide access to health care in communities. That is the starting point for quality health care in this province: reasonable budgets and planning that allows us to get the best health care we can.

Listen to local people. Listen to your own colleague, Mr Wettlaufer. Listen to what he says when he says that if it were not for St Mary's hospital in his community, he would be dead today. That's a quote, Minister. He says, "I would be dead today."

People are worried. They think your restructuring process is a sham. They know it is driven by the bottom line, the dollars you have taken out of hospital budgets and the fact that hospitals can't provide quality care any more.

Just ask the people of Kitchener what they think is going to happen. It has nothing to do with future needs. Ask the people of Wiarton as they look at the closure of their community hospital. Ask whether your cuts have anything to do with saving lives; it is jeopardizing them, and your own member has said that.

Minister, will you not understand, will you not admit that because you have cut \$1.3 billion from hospital budgets, there is only one bottom line driving the direction of your restructuring, and that is: "Cut, and cut quickly, and damn the consequences for health. Full speed ahead."

Hon Mr Wilson: There is only one party that has cut health care in the province of Ontario, and that is the federal Liberal government, which cut health care by \$2.1 billion. That is a fact of life. Go talk to Ottawa. If you think of \$2.1 billion, we wouldn't have a problem with physicians today, who want \$500 million, a small portion of the \$2.1 billion. In fact, although I think it would be the wrong thing for the system — because it is right to restructure, it is right to create centres of excellence, it is

right to get the waste and duplication of administration out of the system — the status quo isn't even possible because of the \$2.1-billion cuts.

Rather than throw up our arms, we are taking a very responsible approach. Restructuring is being led by health experts and people who know of what they speak. The honourable member should point fingers at the federal government. The only party in this province cutting health care is the Liberal Party of Canada.

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Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): It's very interesting that the Minister of Health can afford a \$5-billion tax break for wealthy people in Ontario but can't afford enough money for health care and says it's someone else's fault.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is also for the Minister of Health. The minister says he has a contingency plan in the event that doctors take no further patients or doctors go on strike. His contingency plan is to send patients to the United States, so I want to ask the minister about that contingency plan. In Ontario an obstetrician currently receives \$290 for each normal delivery. The cost of the hospital stay averages \$900. Now in Detroit at Hutzel Hospital the average cost for delivery and hospital stay is \$10,000. This is not a complicated issue, Minister, and we checked with Ministry of Health staff. So we're dealing with \$10,000 in a Detroit hospital as opposed to \$1,190 in an Ontario hospital.

All of this doesn't take into account the administrative costs and the concurrent nightmares in processing all those American claims through Ontario's health care system. In addition, it does not take into account the prenatal and post-partum care of the patient. We know that doctors' fees in the US vary quite a bit. In Ontario, if an obstetrician sees a patient from conception through birth and post-partum, that doctor would receive another \$540. So we're comparing now about \$1,500 in Ontario with \$10,000 at a Detroit hospital. Suggesting that you can deal with the problem you've created by sending women to the United States doesn't provide any comfort to the 1,300 women without a doctor.

Minister, can you tell us, if it costs seven times as much in the United States to pay for these health care problems, how are you going to do this?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The naysayers and fearmongers on the other side of the House do a great disservice to the patients and people of Ontario. Only 40 of the 219 hospitals in this province expect any disruption in a worst-case scenario. So we expect to have enough capacity in Ontario to deal with any foreseen consequences of any job actions by any health care providers.

Having said that, I don't expect we will ever have to use the contingency plans, which are not my contingency plans. I am not at the table developing these contingency plans. Officials from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Ontario Hospital Association and, yes, Ministry of Health officials are jointly developing these plans.

I will not speculate today because I believe with the goodwill that we've seen from the Ontario Medical Association and this government that over the next month during our rounds of serious negotiations we will go a long way towards solving the frustrations that physicians have today in this province, had in the extreme when you were in government for five years and were out on the front lawn in 1986 when the Liberals were in government.

This is not a new phenomenon. Unhappy physicians are a North American phenomenon and we will deal with it in the forum that has been set up with the Ontario Medical Association in the serious negotiations that we're about to enter into next Tuesday.

Mr Hampton: Once again, the Minister of Health doesn't answer the question. The question is, and we all know this, that when patients are sent to the United States, the costs go up astronomically. The minister, earlier this week, said to people all across Ontario that his contingency plan was to send patients to the United States. I simply asked him how he's going to pay for it, and once again he doesn't have an answer. So let me try again.

We met with the OMA last night, and I have to say that there is not a lot of goodwill at the OMA for you, Minister. As far as they're concerned, they're tired of hearing about your contingency plans that amount to nothing. But let's have another go at it.

It has been reported that you have \$700 million to pay for this so-called contingency plan. It has been reported that's how much you have. If that's what you have, why don't you use it and get down to tackling the real structural problem that exists in Ontario. The real structural problem with obstetricians is that 40% of them are over 50 years old. They're going to leave the system at some point in the next few years anyway, so why don't you sit down now with your \$700 million instead of blowing it in the United States and getting nothing for it? Why don't you sit down now and start to tackle the real structural problem?

Hon Mr Wilson: The issue the honourable member raises is a good issue that narrows down to the appropriate supply of specialists in this province. It's an issue that all governments have struggled with. We certainly have some of the best education programs here. We are still a very good place to practise medicine in North America. We are having ongoing discussions through the entire time that I've been minister with the OMA about trying to attract medical students and stream them into specialties where they know they're very much needed by the people of Ontario. That's an ongoing problem and there are solutions to that; from time to time the two parties work out and we are able to attract students into the proper stream. So this is a physician resource management question, a legitimate question, and one that all governments have had to deal with.

Secondly, I watched last night the OMA's video sent out to all the doctors in the province and I can tell you absolutely that Dr Gerry Rowland, the president of the OMA, said on many occasions in that video that was just sent out to all the doctors that there's a lot of goodwill between the government and the OMA and said nothing

negative about the government to his membership in the recent video.

Mr Hampton: It's nice to know the Minister of Health spends his time watching videos. I'd like to say to the minister, we met with the real people last night at the OMA and I don't know what you're watching in your videos, but we came away from the meeting with quite a different view of what's happening and quite a different view of how people are feeling about how you've handled the health care system in Ontario.

They're very clear: It's your mishandling of the health care system, it's your resort to Bill 26, which essentially took the OMA out of the picture and that has created many of these problems. Now you have to go across the province and talk to literally dozens of physician groups. You've got no way of managing the problem. And they're very clear about that: You created your own problem; you created your own unmanageable situation.

I want to go back to the original question because I still don't have an answer. The minister is proposing to send 1,300 women to the United States for childbirth and he's proposing to pay \$13 million in the United States, when delivery in Ontario would cost \$2 million. And then he has the gall to tell people this is all about saving money in the health care system.

I want to ask the minister again — that is your contingency plan; it's the one you told people in Ontario all about — how is it that refusing to tackle the real structural problem, how is it that sending 1,300 women to the United States to have their children born there and spending \$13 million there rather than \$2 million at home, how is it that this gets us anywhere, Minister?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member across the way has a lot of gall. The doctors began to really get upset with government when you signed an agreement with them in 1991 and 1993, and didn't live up to eight of the 12 aspects, which ended up before the courts. We come into office; we inherit legal bills of millions of dollars, with both sides before the umpires in this quasi-judicial arbitrated system that you set up, and nothing — everything at a stalemate, people fighting across the table.

The doctors walked out on you in February 1995 and we've got them back to the table. We should be congratulated for taking a proper approach to negotiations. They walked out on you, something you will wear and that party will wear for the rest of your existence here in the province of Ontario, and we're having a constructive relationship. I watched the video because the president of the OMA sent it to me and I had the courtesy to watch it. Maybe you should watch it and show some courtesy to the president of the OMA.

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HEALTH BENEFIT ALLOWANCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I would ask the next question of the Minister of Community and Social Services, but she is not here, so I'll go back to the Minister of Health. He's the only minister who could ever have most physicians in the province ready to refuse new patients and say that he's creating a good relationship. How absurd.

What can the minister tell us about the Ministry of Health benefit allowance? Has the Ministry of Health benefit allowance commenced? If so, when did it commence or when is it going to commence? What does the Ministry of Health benefit allowance deal with?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I do not know the answer to what the Ministry of Health benefit allowance is. Perhaps the honourable member could tell me whether it's referred to by a different name or what program he's referring to.

Mr Hampton: For some time we have been aware that the government is trying to move some people who are the responsibility of the Ministry of Community and Social Services over into the Ministry of Health, into the health budget, and then say: "The Ministry of Health budget is still \$17.4 billion. Don't worry, the health budget hasn't changed, but please ignore the fact that all these new people are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Health." So you have more claims for the \$17.4 billion than you ever had before.

Does the Minister of Health admit that the government is planning to move responsibility for seniors and disabled people out of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and into the Ministry of Health with no budget increase? Does the minister acknowledge that?

Hon Mr Wilson: Seniors has already moved to the Ministry of Health, and we have a minister for seniors, in case somebody missed the cabinet shuffle. The program dollars are fully protected. There weren't really many program dollars over at culture for that. With respect to whatever other thing you're concocting over there, I have no idea what you're talking about.

Mr Hampton: I want to read the Minister of Health this memorandum that a client at Comsoc received. It's a computer-printed one and it says:

"I wish to advise that your allowance under the Family Benefits Act has been adjusted, effective July 1, 1996, in light of the following changes in circumstances: Ministry of Health benefit allowance has commenced. Basic allowance has ceased. Shelter allowance has ceased. Medical transit allowance has ceased."

The person who received this is just an ordinary citizen, someone who received an allowance from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Imagine their surprise when they're now told that the Ministry of Health benefit allowance has commenced.

Let me tell you what I think the government is up to. Not only have they transferred responsibility for senior citizens to the Ministry of Health, with no commensurate budget increase in the Ministry of Health, they are also transferring responsibility for up to 170,000 people with disabilities into the Ministry of Health, about \$2 billion worth of budget. But there has been no commensurate increase in the Ministry of Health budget. In other words, it's a shell game.

Yes, the Ministry of Health budget may be \$17.4 billion or \$17.5 billion, but the fact is that the government is loading more and more responsibility in there and therefore there are more claims for that \$17 billion, which means in effect the Ministry of Health budget has been cut and has been cut more than this minister was prepared to let on.

Minister, will you admit that your government is in the process of transferring some of the responsibility for disabled people from the Ministry of Community and Social Services into the Ministry of Health, that you're not increasing the budget at the same time, which constitutes either a budget cut for disabled people or for health care services in the province? Which is it?

Hon Mr Wilson: I don't know what the honourable member is talking about, other than that if the honourable member would like to read the Common Sense Revolution document, it did say we would be setting up a guaranteed income plan for seniors and disabled, because we think it is wrong that people who are on prolonged disability and have no hope of working again — seniors had to go on welfare to get certain benefits. We said that was against the dignity of human beings like seniors, who don't deserve to have to go on social assistance, and that they should have their own guaranteed income plan.

If the Minister of Community and Social Services were here, they could probably get a fuller explanation, but there currently are discussions going on with consumers, seniors, external groups and the federal Liberal government about how we might structure that plan and fully live up to that part of the Common Sense Revolution and all the Common Sense Revolution.

That is all that is going on. If the honourable member wants to send me across this alleged piece of paper, I'd be happy to look at it. It doesn't seem like very much from here. It's a little scribble on a corner of a page. I'd be happy to try to be more informative, but I can tell you that his speculation is way out of line and way off the mark.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question also is to the Minister of Health. Minister, on January 17, 1996, you wrote to several health service providers in Sudbury, indicating: "My ministry has already accepted the district health council's recommendations regarding clinical programs, support services and sitings as identified in the hospital services review report. Consideration of other siting models is not acceptable."

Minister, are you still supportive of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Health Council's HSR report and siting designations?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member will know that the Health Services Restructuring Commission, which is at arm's length from the government, will very soon be rendering a decision on Sudbury, and I do not know what that decision will be.

Mr Bartolucci: So much for the response that the minister gave to our leader. He certainly avoided the question, and I don't appreciate it.

But let me follow up by saying that the report is going to come down on Monday — you're right — a week later than it should have. We all know the reason why; certainly you do. You all know that the so-called \$1.3-billion savings is not to improve service and is not to enhance health care. It's simply to achieve a 30% tax cut.

Having said that — and I'd like an answer to this question, Minister — is it your intention to support the

health services commission's recommendation to close the Memorial Hospital, the Sudbury General Hospital and the Algoma Hospital if the commission hands down a one-site model for Sudbury and district?

Hon Mr Wilson: The process is very clear to everyone. The commission will render its interim decision, there'll be a 30-day period in which the public and the ministry are invited to make comment, and we will avail ourselves of that period as we expect the honourable member and others to do. At the end of the day, the decision is that of the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

I would again remind honourable members that health care has not been cut one penny in this province; in fact, it's up significantly this year over last year.

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CANCER TREATMENT CENTRE

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): My question is to the Minister of Health. The minister will be aware that the condition of the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre is very poor. It was recommended for improvements, was approved for a \$20-million capital project by our government and you said you were going to confirm that. Can the minister now confirm to the House that he has changed the \$20-million confirmation and 100% provincial funding to two-thirds provincial funding, which means you've cut it back to \$18 million total, only \$12 million of provincial money, and that's leaving the community \$6 million they're going to have to raise for this regional cancer centre? Can you confirm that?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): It is true that we made the announcement publicly that the funding formula for cancer centres has changed from 100% — this is the capital portion — to 75%, as has the funding formula for public hospitals. We believe very strongly — and we're told by the cancer experts, the OCTRF, Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, and others — that local communities would be very happy to raise a small portion of dollars towards capital projects.

I would ask the indulgence of the honourable member to check exactly the status of that project, because some projects that had been announced were grandparented. Others where we're still waiting for recommendations as to which centres should be built next — and the OCTRF is getting back to us on that — would fall under the new formula. I will endeavour to get the answer back to the honourable member as quickly as possible.

Mr Cooke: I can assure the minister that unless his ministry changes the policy and does exempt the Windsor centre, they've already been told they're going to have to raise \$6 million. While the minister can say that the cancer associations say they can raise the money, let me tell you the situation we're facing in Windsor right now. With a population in Windsor-Essex of 350,000 people, your ministry is now asking us to raise \$30 million for the reconfiguration or reform of the local hospitals that's part of that whole process, \$2 million for a new MRI and now \$6 million for the cancer centre. We're close to \$40 million we're going to have to raise among 350,000

people. That works out to \$566 per family to be raised for health care reform in Windsor-Essex. But of course you've been good enough — your government has been — to give us a \$172 tax break. How can you be serious about health care reform and reconfiguring the hospitals in Windsor-Essex and expect that a community of our size can raise that kind of capital money? Something's got to go.

Hon Mr Wilson: I take the concerns expressed by the honourable member quite seriously and I'd be happy to sit down with him and representatives of his community, the district health council and that, to see how we can work through this. You've done a great job. You're the first area of the province to undergo significant restructuring. You've received a 106% increase in your home care budget. We're waiting for customers in your riding right now. We have more dollars available for that side of the ledger. We've taken that money out of the new dollars in health care. You're in pretty good shape, but you make a good point on the capital side and I'll see what we can do. I'll be happy to have those discussions with you on behalf of your community.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): My question today is for the Minister without Portfolio responsible for privatization. First, I'd like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment, which I think is in recognition of his excellent work so far on automobile insurance reforms. So my congratulations to the minister.

Some consumers in Niagara South have been receiving details on changes to their automobile insurance due to the implementation of Bill 59, the Automobile Insurance Rate Stability Act. My understanding was that Bill 59 maximizes choice for consumers and for drivers.

My question to the minister is, how will consumers in Port Colborne and Fort Erie benefit from this?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): I thank my colleague the member for Niagara South for the kind introduction and the welcome to this portfolio.

Applause.

Hon Mr Sampson: I also thank the honourable members opposite for that round of applause. I suspect that might be the last time they do that.

My colleague the member for Niagara South is correct: We decided to reform auto insurance because we felt it was important for consumers to finally have some choice in automobile insurance purchasing in this province. That's something they haven't had for years and years. The last two reforms withdrew choice from consumers in auto insurance. So we were happy to deliver a plan that allowed consumers to choose between income protection levels, to choose between disability protection levels, to choose various levels of death benefits etc. We think it's important.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's my understanding that the Minister of Finance is the minister responsible for financial institutions. It's also my information that an order in

council hasn't been signed that would give the authority to answer with regard to financial institutions to the minister for privatization. I wonder if you might take that point of order into consideration.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): I'll take that under advisement for just a few seconds.

To the member, I wonder if, sir, you are in charge of auto insurance under your portfolio?

Hon Mr Sampson: Yes, I am taking responsibility for auto insurance.

The Speaker: The question, in that case, would be in order, and the answer would be in order.

Mr Crozier: Can the minister clarify, then, whether that responsibility has been given by order in council.

The Speaker: Minister, if you could clarify that.

Hon Mr Sampson: I was carrying the auto insurance legislation. It's a matter of record in Hansard. At this point in time I'm not aware of the fact that an order in council is required, sir.

The Speaker: I believe that is not a point of order.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr Speaker, I recognize this is your first day, and we are not attempting to be difficult, and I realize this is the first question for the minister. But the minister is responding that he has responsibility for something that he had responsibility for when he was a parliamentary assistant, not as minister for privatization. How can he carry on the responsibilities of parliamentary assistant when someone else has the role now?

The Speaker: I'll check to see if I can get a response from the House leader to that question.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Stop the clock.

The Speaker: It is not the procedure, I don't believe, to stop the clock at these moments.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I can only advise that Mr Sampson has had carriage of this issue in the past. My understanding is that Mr Sampson is still involved at this point.

Interjections.

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The Speaker: I believe the member for Niagara South was next on the point of order.

Mr Hudak: I have a very simple question on behalf of my constituents from Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Wainfleet and Niagara Falls, a lot of questions in my office on this topic, and I'd like to address the question and continue with my supplemental if I could.

The Speaker: After having heard all that, I rule that the point of order is not a point of order and we will continue with the response.

Hon Mr Sampson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I guess if you'd ruled in their favour, they would have had to applaud again the next time I answered a question.

Clearly, as I was saying, we delivered on our promise to the electorate to provide the consumers of this province with some choice in their automobile insurance. That's what the Automobile Insurance Rate Stability Act did do, and I'm proud of it.

Mr Hudak: I'm relaying this question on behalf of my constituents. It's a very important issue in my riding and

I appreciate the opportunity to ask and get an answer on these issues.

Again to the minister without portfolio responsible for privatization, there are a number of detailed questions I received at the Wainfleet Fair, and also to my office in Stevensville, Ontario. How can we ensure that consumers receive clear answers and understand the benefits they are going to receive from Bill 59?

Hon Mr Sampson: I want to inform my colleague from Niagara South that consumer choice in the delivery of that information has been very important to us. Auto insurance has been a complex subject for consumers to understand and we have tried to simplify that process. The industry has provided a brochure and has sent that to their various insureds. There will be an extensive advertising program to help consumers finally understand what options they have under this plan. I will be today writing the industry, instructing them to ensure they provide maximum consumer choice to consumers in the delivery of this new plan when it becomes effective on November 1, because our plan was about more choice for auto insurance, a much better product at today's price.

NEGATIVE OPTION MARKETING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Speaker, welcome to the chair.

My question is for the minister responsible for consumer protection. Yesterday when I asked you, as the consumer minister, if you were going to end the practice of negative option billing in Ontario, you said, "Clearly the matter of negative billing is something we should be looking at in terms of consumer protection." Minister, you've had a day to think about it. Can you tell this House today what exactly you're going to do to protect consumers from negative option billing?

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Minister of consumer and corporate affairs.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Mr Speaker, as I understand it, that was not the way I was addressed by the honourable member across the way.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Quit being so stupid over there. Answer the question.

Interjections.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is no desire to waste time. I believe that the people of Ontario expect decorum in the House. A part of that decorum which you have explained today involves addressing the ministers by their proper title. It's a simple issue. He was not addressed by his proper title. The members opposite surely know the proper title.

The Speaker: I believe he called him the minister of consumer protection. I think his intent was correct, so we won't allow a point of order on that. If the minister would continue with his response, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's just that I was taking things in the context of the rest of the titles that were being thrown over from across the floor today.

It was my understanding yesterday that the question asked by the member for Essex South was an isolated instance. I have investigated the matter further and consulted with the Minister of Finance and found that perhaps this issue is a little wider spread than originally thought. The intent, of course, of Bill 59 was to ensure consumer options. Certainly that's something that this government wants to ensure, consumer options.

I want this House to know that this government will not tolerate these types of practices, and I wish to thank the honourable member for drawing this to our attention. I think it's important, and I want to assure the House that this government will rectify this situation whether it's by regulation, by legislation or by other measures. I would also like to advise that my colleague the Minister of Finance, who is not here right now, will be sending a letter today to the insurance industry indicating to them that this practice will not be tolerated.

Mr Crozier: I appreciate the fact, having raised the question in the Legislature yesterday, that it has apparently moved the government to take some action, because if anything came out of yesterday's discussion, and I'm sure there has been some clarification since that time, it's that any time any service — and the insurance industry was an example — any time that doing nothing is given as an option, in any reasonable thinking person's mind would be negative option. I'm pleased to hear that the minister today has advised us that he will in fact do that.

Might I suggest, Minister, that the Consumer Protection Act merely needs to be amended, and we would support an amendment to that effect.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Correctional Services, and it's returning to the issue of young offenders and the treatment of young offenders under his care. Minister, you've assured the public time and time again that no youth would be put in adult settings and that no youth would be put in adult segregation. In fact when, after the tragic death of James Lonnee, this issue was addressed by you in a press scrum on September 11, a reporter said to you, following the riots and events at Elgin-Middlesex, "You assured the public that there would be no youth put in adult settings and no youth would be put in adult segregation," and you responded, "That's right."

On Tuesday you gave me reassurances again in response to the questions that I put to you about this. That very day a young offender, a 16-year-old, was being housed in adult segregation at Vanier, with adult offenders in cells on either side of her. I don't know what good your directives are if nobody is following them. I don't know when you're going to get control of your ministry, Minister, but were you aware of this particular youth at Vanier? Is this kind of contravention routine? Did you approve this? Did your deputy minister or your assistant deputy minister approve this? When are you going to put a stop to this practice, as you promised the people of Ontario?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): It's interesting that

the member tries to take this tack time and time again, as do members of her party, with respect to challenges and problems within the corrections systems in Ontario, both the youth and adult sides.

I have indicated that we're making the most wide-ranging changes in the corrections system of any government in memory, and certainly problem after problem came before that government when they were in power. I have a list of incidents that could choke a cow, from 1987 till we took power in 1995, many of them on the young offenders side.

We're moving, as I said, on a wide range of fronts to deal with this issue in a substantive way, and I'm very confident that we're doing the appropriate things, the right things, to deal with young offenders.

I have no doubt when incidents like this arise, Mr Speaker —

Ms Lankin: Mr Speaker, he's just running the clock. Wind him down.

Hon Mr Runciman: This member, we know, has had experience in the corrections system. She certainly is very much aware of the challenges of the corrections culture, and no doubt we're going to have incidents of this nature, any kinds of problems or allegations, raised on a daily basis —

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Come on, Mr Speaker. He's running the clock.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): If the minister will answer the question, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: — in an effort to try and suggest that this is some new kind of challenge for the Ontario government and we aren't dealing with this in an effective way when in fact these problems have been around for years and years and years, and those governments, both of them, failed to deal with it in an effective way. We are going to deal with it in an effective way.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Ms Lankin: You let it run out, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I believe this has happened in the past.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, if I could, I wish to advise the House of the weekly business statement.

Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of September 30, 1996.

On Monday, September 30, we hope to complete second reading of Bill 57, an act to improve the environmental approvals process. On Tuesday, October 1, we will be in the opposition day, standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition. On Wednesday, October 2, we hope to complete third reading of Bill 70, the Tax Credits and Economic Stimulation Act. On Thursday, October 3, we will begin second reading of Bill 79, the Courts Improvement Act, although, as we all note, there could be other activities on Thursday that I'm sure every member of the House is aware of at this point.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of the standing committees:

On the standing committee on administration of justice, Mr Wildman be substituted for Mr Hampton; on the standing committee on estimates, Mr Kormos be substituted for Mr Martin; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Mr Pouliot be substituted for Ms Lankin and Mr Martin be substituted for Mr Silipo; on the standing committee on government agencies, Mr Silipo be substituted for Mr Martin; on the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, Mr Wildman be substituted for Mr Cooke; on the standing committee on regulations and private bills, Mr Martin be substituted for Mr Pouliot; and on the standing committee on social development, Mr Cooke be substituted for Mr Wildman and Ms Lankin be substituted for Mr Laughren.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(h), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 39, 40, 41 and 42 and that Mr Ouellette and Mrs Marland exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

CHILD CARE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have this petition that is signed by hundreds of residents of Parkdale and beyond. It's addressed to the assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Tory government has decided to replace our current child care system with one that lacks compassion and common sense and is fraught with many dangerous consequences; and

"Whereas the concept of affordable, accessible and quality child care is a basic, important, fundamental right for many members of our community who are either unemployed and enrolled into a training program or are working single parents or where both parents are working; and

"Whereas if our present provincial government is sincere in getting people back to work, they should recognize the value of the child care component of the Jobs Ontario program and acknowledge the validity of the wage subsidy to the child care workers,

"We, therefore, the undersigned residents, business owners and child care workers of our Parkdale and High Park communities urge the Progressive Conservative

government of Ontario to immediately suspend their plans to implement cuts to our present child care programs across our province, and restore funding to their previous levels."

I've affixed my signature to this document.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Speaker, I must congratulate you on your position, which I'm sure you'll find interesting and hard at times in controlling the members of the House. You're doing very well.

I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which comes from a number of residents in my particular area and in which they show some concern with respect to the proposed legislation on rent control. I take the pleasure of reading it to the House.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to remove rent control from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever rent they want; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will eliminate rent control on new buildings, and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent control system."

I agree with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I rise to present a petition on behalf of John Martin and John Balloch of Local 1005, United Steelworkers of America. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and

advice continue to be provided through the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers."

I support this petition and show that support by signing my name along with theirs.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Once again, I present to the Parliament of Ontario today my third petition on condominium overcrowding, containing several hundred names.

"Whereas the present Condominium Act of Ontario does not give the condominium corporations the legal right to limit the number of people who occupy each unit in the complex, thus causing overcrowding situations in many buildings; and

"Whereas this overcrowding creates excessive demand on services and facilities of the condominiums, leading to tensions, violence, fire and health problems, increased maintenance expenses, and depreciation of values;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly recommend that the Condominium Act of Ontario be amended to give the condominium corporations, through their own rules and regulations, the legal right to limit the number of persons per unit and a right of entry to ensure adherence to the rules. The rights of condominium owners and taxpayers must be considered and supported in order to alleviate the inequitable situation."

I have the petition here and there are several hundred names on it.

1500

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition signed by thousands of auto workers and forwarded to me by the health and safety department of

the Canadian Auto Workers union and their national office. The petition reads as follows:

"To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose any attempts to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"We demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I affix my name in support of this petition.

ST MARYS SCHOOL

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The Chair recognizes the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think you're doing a fine job.

I have a petition here signed by many people from my riding regarding St Marys school in Victoria Harbour in my riding, and I'd like to file it today.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Mr Speaker, as you know, a week tomorrow, Friday, October 4, the final verdict of the Health Services Restructuring Commission will be coming down in Thunder Bay. Certainly, I want to give an enormous amount of credit to all the people who've responded to the initial report in June and have written thousands of letters and petitions and faxes. I would like to read at least one of the petitions today.

"To the Legislative Assembly:

"We do not believe you have made the best choice for the health care system in northwestern Ontario. We are deeply concerned with the speed and the amount of bed reductions you have dictated.

"We are also concerned with your intention to close three hospitals out of the five currently operating in Thunder Bay. These hospitals, although seeming to be concentrated, are in fact providing essential regional service. By reducing the total number of beds from 954 to 526, and in the process eliminating psychiatric and chronic care hospitals, the 428-bed reduction will leave the lives of our families, friends and ourselves at risk.

"If it was your intention to act on behalf of the interests of the public, we, as members of that public, ask you to reflect upon your conscience, for you will be ultimately responsible for the error in this decision."

I sign my name to this petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I have a petition signed by several workers, members of labour councils throughout the province — London and district, Durham Regional Labour Council, Guelph and district, and Brampton-Mississauga — and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I've attached my signature to it as well.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I have a petition from 54 people from the Niagara region. In the petition, they request that the Ontario government negotiate with the co-op housing sector to ensure the long-term financial viability of housing co-ops.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse and crimes such as embezzlement and robbery;

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling with widespread temptation, will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for many years to come;

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across our province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and the desperate in order that the government can cut income taxes, to the greatest benefit of those with the highest income;

"Since the placement of VLTs in bars in Ontario and in permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since Premier Harris and Finance Minister Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province."

I affix my signature to this petition, which has a number of signatures on it, because I'm in agreement with it.

ABORTION

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): Mr Speaker, congratulations to you in your new position.

I'm presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Waterloo North, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas induced abortion is the intentional medical killing of a pre-born human being before birth, and evidence that pre-born human beings of five to six weeks' gestation have the ability to experience pain has been reported as long ago as 1941 and corroborated as recently as 1994;

"Whereas a recent study reviewing all available research on the reasons for abortion in Canada concluded that, 'As the procedure (abortion) is not therapeutic, and as there is mounting evidence that it is harmful to women's health, funding by the government under health care cannot be justified';

"Whereas US studies have shown that where public funding for abortion has been removed, both the pregnancy rate and the abortion rate have dropped significantly;

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require that 'elective procedures' be funded, nor has any Canadian court ever found a constitutional right to publicly fund abortion;

"Whereas it is the responsibility and the authority of the province exclusively to determine what services will be insured;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government remove induced abortion from its medically insured services;

"That the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, endeavour to encourage an alliance between all groups offering crisis pregnancy support across the province."

BEAR HUNTING

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I have a petition here signed by a large number of Ontario residents, most of whom are young people who live in my community of East York and east Toronto. It is a petition to the end the spring bear hunt. It is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government has a duty and responsibility to provide driver examination centres across the province;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the MTO explore every option of retaining driver examinations in the Leamington area, and that the MTO postpone the closing of the present DEC site" in Leamington "until a new solution is formulated."

I affix my signature in support of these 520 petitioners.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU PROCESSUS D'AUTORISATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 57, An Act to improve the Efficiency of the Environmental Approvals Process and Certain Other Matters / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à améliorer l'efficacité du processus d'autorisation environnementale et concernant certaines autres questions.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I will continue today where I left off in talking about this bill. I was giving a rundown of some of the gutting and deregulation that's been taken on to date, which fills pages and pages, unfortunately.

I'm going to talk now very specifically about some of the content of the bill. There are several aspects to this bill that are extremely problematic. However, the most catastrophic portion of this bill relates to something called "permit by rule." Here's how that essentially will work. I'll try to describe it in simple terms so everybody will understand the implications, because as I said yesterday, sometimes if you don't have a background in this area it can get highly technical and it can, on first blush, look like it isn't a problem. Why not cut red tape here? Why not make it easier in some cases? I agree; in some cases this could make sense.

What it means is that the government will give the public 30 days of notice of which class of businesses it wants to exempt from approvals. Essentially, what they want to do is allow permit by rule, and what it means in certain situations — it's kind of like a cookbook; I think that's the best way to describe it. It's a cookbook for industry to follow. It says that if you follow those rules just like a recipe, you no longer need approval for your specific undertaking. The ministry, given that, won't be able to keep track of which companies and industries are setting themselves up in a specific area.

This plan limits public input and public consultation. I would say it flies in the face of the Environmental Bill of Rights, which has already been downgraded under Bill 26 and other moves. This actually flies in the face of more public consultation and involvement in the environ-

mental protection process. It does not give our communities or the public the opportunity to have any say in whether a polluting company is given approval to proceed with an undertaking.

I see that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment is here today and I hope he will listen carefully to my remarks. I don't know if he's listening to me, but I believe that there are environmentalists and some of the critics here in the House who actually have some good ideas as to the kinds of changes that need to be made. It needs to be pointed out that this is not innocuous and that this is yet again another example of this government hurting communities. To tell communities, "You're going to have even less say in environmental protection, that we're going to give you less say than you have now on what might be in your backyard," that is against communities, against families and against environmental protection.

I recall that when we were in government the bureaucrats did bring this forward, but we rejected it because we decided that the public should have a right to participate in discussions that affect their environment and their community. One of the major problems with this aspect of the bill is that the government hasn't even bothered to come clean with the public as to which industrial sectors will be exempt from approvals with this legislation. This is unbelievable. The government is saying to us, and saying to people who happen to have picked this up on the environmental registry and got the information, achieved it: "We want to do this, but don't worry. It'll be just little, insignificant things." But when we ask for a list, they don't have it.

When this bill was tabled we asked for a list of industrial sectors. We were told they couldn't provide such a list. We were told, however, that the first phase can be found in the responsive environmental deregulation package. But this is not good enough; there is not a complete list of sectors that will be affected. I find it interesting that the new minister and the previous minister, when asked, when pressed to give us a list, said, "We don't have it yet, but use things like restaurants," which in most people's minds — well, they could agree that permit by rule might be okay for restaurants because they're generally in a business section anyway; you don't find a lot of restaurants plunked down in communities. However, in my riding there are a lot of restaurants abutting residential areas, so even restaurants in some cases can be a problem. However, when pressed, we were told that it could involve paint shops or dry-cleaners. These particular industries can cause severe problems in neighbourhoods, and those are to be considered as innocuous, as easy ones, ones that should be given permit by rule.

But we don't have a complete list, so we want the government to come forward today and I'm hoping the parliamentary assistant by now has been given a complete list so we at least know what we're talking about today. We don't want these kinds of environmental deregulation happening in secret and asking us to vote for it, asking the community to trust them, given the record to date. We don't even know what industries they're talking about here.

The former minister, as I said, told us that the bill could apply to dry-cleaners, who do use a variety of dangerous cancer-causing chemicals and other substances that create smog and polluted air, and I don't need again to go into detail about the problems we have in Metro Toronto with smog. I presume Hamilton has such problems, and all the other urban areas. It's a major problem and yet that's one of the ones that the government is saying easily can fit under this permit by rule.

She also said it could apply to autobody paint shops. These paint shops emit in some cases very dangerous chemicals.

I think the major concern for me is that permit by rule does not take into account the cumulative effect of a number of industries locating in a specific area. When you've got permit by rule, the cookbook, and you can show to the ministry that you've got the recipe all down, that's all you have to do. You can set up your paint shop or whatever it may be in a community without anybody knowing about it. I come back again to the point I made earlier about the fact that therefore the community won't know about it, will have no information, will have no opportunity to come forward and say: "Okay, maybe in a certain location this paint shop would not be a problem. However, we've got five others because we live close to an industrial area. The cumulative effect is too much." There will be no opportunity to do that.

Those are some examples, and just a very few examples, the ones that the previous minister said would be included under this permit by rule thing. We don't know about the others.

Let's face it: The ministry needs this legislation because the government is getting out of the business of environmental protection. Day after day after day we see yet again, and sometimes very quietly, regulations being changed and removed — not part of these bills that we at least get some chance to participate in and speak to. Day after day there's something else being taken off the books, being deregulated.

The massive cuts brought on by this government to finance the tax cut, which I talked about yesterday, mean that there are fewer ministry employees in the field. There simply are not the numbers any more to monitor and give the approvals, and I don't care how many times the government says it, people will not be fooled by this.

In my neighbourhood of Riverdale alone, in the south Riverdale part, over the years, because it's in an industrial area, there have been numerous problems, noise and odour. Under another bill, this government has got out of that business altogether and has shifted over to municipalities. People in my neighbourhood have relied for years and years on the Ministry of Environment to deal with severe problems around noise and odour, particularly odour. There have been numerous other problems in the community as well, and over the years, working with the Ministry of Environment — not always easy; sometimes it's taken years to get things closed down, if necessary, or relocated — we have had people there to come out and measure the odour and help us out.

The problem with downloading that on to municipalities, especially with the transfer cuts this government has also inflicted, is that this is not going to be a priority for

most municipalities given the fact that they gave to make some tough choices with their limited budget.

What this is about — let's be honest about it, as I said yesterday — is simply about doing less. The government often repeated the mantra, "Doing better with less," but let's be clear, let's be really clear: It simply is about doing less. That means that children will feel the effects for generations to come, and that's what we have to bear in mind here.

1520

I see the Minister of Health is with us today, which makes me very happy, because the Minister of Health should pay attention to what is happening. I know he's busy now fighting with the doctors and posturing with the doctors, but he should be aware that these environmental decisions that are being made by one other arm of his government are actually doing things that are going to affect the health of the people of Ontario, which just in pure economic terms means that the cost of health care is going to go up.

We already know there's more asthma and lung-related, respiratory-related illnesses as a result of smog. Has this government done anything? No. But the Minister of Health should listen carefully and be a champion. If nobody else in that government, including the Minister of Environment, will be a champion and speak up for environmental protection at the cabinet table, the Minister of Health has a vested interest in doing that.

I will say that this legislation is good news to the polluters of the province. I guess that's one of the reasons they've contributed to the Tory election campaign, in great numbers I may add. The only way polluters can get into trouble is if they're caught breaking the rules. But how is it going to happen when the government doesn't even know that the activity is taking place? More important, how will the ministry have the staff to police everything that's going on? They won't. With the 35% cuts that are already in place, and we suspect more to come, I can guarantee you that the polluters have figured that out.

The government continues to protest and say, "Oh, we just need to cut red tape and make it more efficient," but many of the permits that were issued before weren't needed. That's what they say, that they weren't needed. The problems were covered by municipal property standards or health regulations or whatever. In some cases they're right, there's no doubt about that. It's no problem trying to find those, consulting with the community, all who have concerns about this and really carefully weeding out the ones that did need to be taken off the books or changed.

But why, then, is the government exempting itself from any liability that may arise from this deregulation? If they're so confident that these measures will not be harmful, will not hurt the environment, will not hurt our communities, why are they doing that? That is a very good question, which has not been answered. Why are they saying, "We won't be responsible for the consequences of our actions"? If the government is so sure that the regulations that it's gutting aren't needed, why won't it prove that and put its money where its mouth is? Why won't it at least let the poor citizen who may suffer

because of its negligence get some justice through the courts? They have said no.

If some catastrophe or even small event takes place because of this deregulation, this permit by rule, the poor citizen who is affected by this has no recourse. I find this passing strange for a government that says it cares about individual property rights to say to people: "If our actions hurt you in any way, too bad, go away. We're not going to let you take us to court. We're not going to compensate you in any way."

I've talked a bit about the fact that the government has failed to tell us which categories of businesses will get the exemptions. It assures us that the exemptions will be minor and won't involve any serious polluting activity. But they've left the exemption so wide open that, according to Rick Lindgren of the Canadian Environmental Law Association — and get this, Mr Speaker, because it is very important — as the bill is now written, the bill will let the government exempt virtually anyone or anything from any legislative or regulatory requirements under the Environmental Protection Act or the Ontario Water Resources Act. This is indeed very scary and, I would say, arrogant.

We obviously need public hearings on this bill. If the government did not mean in its legislation to allow itself to let anyone or anything be exempted, then surely the public needs to have a say about what they think should be on that list, if anything, and make sure that the legislation is amended to make sure that this indeed cannot happen, that a garbage incinerator, or a dump — and some of you here in this room today may live in an area which could be affected. I would like to think that's not the government's intention, but the way the bill is written now, that is indeed the situation.

We need public hearings and we need the government to come clean and tell the people of this province which businesses they're going to exempt and which activities they're going to exempt. Will it be incinerators? I hope the answer is no. Will it be chemical plants? I hope the answer is no. But we don't know. They haven't said. They won't give us a list. So you've got wide-open legislation and we haven't been provided with a list.

This government cannot be trusted when it comes to environmental protection, and that's part of the problem with the bill as it's now worded. We have to make sure, if the government does not intend the way this bill is worded, we need to know that this government does not have the legislative authority under certain circumstances to exempt some major environmental undertaking which could have a huge impact on the community.

I am going to talk a minute about the aspect that the government can't be trusted when it comes to environmental protection. I talked yesterday about much of the anti-environment deregulation cutting that's already happened within the Ministry of the Environment but also in the Ministry of Natural Resources. When you put the two together, it truly is catastrophic in the long run.

I have some documents here. Some environmental groups and lawyers and policy analysts have responded to this bill and the other deregulation bill — and let me add again, they are part and parcel of the same package, so you have to deal with them at the same time. In fact

this bill we're discussing today refers — we were told to refer to the other bill about deregulation to see the list of some of the things which might come under permit by rule.

I have a document here that was written in response by a group called Stop Environmental Deregulation in Canada. This is a group mainly of students who have become extremely alarmed about this government's anti-environment agenda. They head their submission — I believe they did a press conference on this — the heading of their document is, and I'm reading this: "Gutting Environmental Protection: The Harris Government is Lying about its Deregulatory Agenda."

Their table of contents is: "(1) Harris government lies; (2) A missed opportunity; (3) What industry wants... industry gets; (4) Proposed deregulation in Responsive Environmental Protection; (5) SEDIC Recommendations; (6) About Stop Environmental Deregulation in Canada."

In their summary they make "the following comments on the regulatory 'reform' consultation paper":

"(1) The Harris government says it wants to protect the environment but has taken a large number of fiscal and legislative actions which weaken environmental protection.

"(2) As a result, Ontario citizens must be suspicious when the consultation paper says the proposed regulatory changes will only improve efficiency and not lower standards. It is impossible for them to participate in good faith in a genuine regulatory reform exercise.

"(3) In fact, the objective of the consultation process is not genuine regulatory reform. Instead, the proposals add up to three forms of deregulation: defunding environmental protection (on which the paper is silent); replacing law with volunteerism; lower standards."

1530

A little later on this group talks about, and again I am reading this from their paper under the heading, "(1) Harris Government Lies":

"Premier Harris, as noted in the letter to the editor reproduced above" — which I'm going to read in a minute because I think it's of great interest to the members in this House today — "has been quoted as saying, 'Protecting the environment for the future generations ranks equally with us as the fiscal situation for future generations.'"

It was Mike Harris who said that. Similarly the consultation paper states, "The fundamental objective of MOEE's regulatory reform is to ensure continued human health and safety and environmental protection while eliminating red tape, obsolete regulations and simplifying the system in order to promote economic growth and jobs.

"Unfortunately neither statement is true."

Another very important aspect of the document by this group deals with what they call "A missed opportunity," and I think this is very important because this group is saying that they have no objections to true regulatory reform. I quote again briefly:

"Because the Harris government will not admit to what it is doing, Ontario citizens cannot work with it in good faith to improve regulatory efficiency. The 1996 consultation paper, Responsive Environmental Protection, there-

fore represents a missed opportunity. All stakeholders — industry, environmentalists, government officials and members of the interested public — agree that environmental regulation should be as efficient as possible. We should protect the environment at the lowest possible cost to industry, government and the taxpayer. Updating and amending environmental regulations to improve efficiency without lowering the standards they set is a worthwhile exercise.... Because of the record of the Harris government, they must be suspicious that what is presented as regulatory reform is in fact environmental deregulation."

The point they're trying to make is that there is goodwill out there with the so-called special-interest groups, the environmentalists. To me it's very weird to refer to environmental groups as special-interest. Their special interest is protecting our health in the community, the population at large, yet somehow the bankers and big businesses that want to make more and more money are not referred to as special-interest by this government.

I'm just going to read one more portion of this document because I think it's a very important element of what is in this government document that we're debating today, which is truly work going in the wrong direction. This is moving from law to self-regulation. I'll read again from the document:

"Many of the industry submissions called for the move from command and control regulation to voluntary and self-regulation, as advocated by the consultation paper. To do so is to put the fox to guard the chicken coop. To achieve its goal of competitiveness and profit maximization, any given business firm must operate at the lowest possible cost. One way it does that is to 'externalize' costs of waste and pollution so they are paid by the larger society and not the firm. Prior to the establishment of the modern regulatory system, firms in Ontario spent almost nothing on pollution prevention or proper waste disposal. Because we now have laws which are enforced, that is no longer the case."

What is being said here is that going in this direction to volunteerism means we're going back to the bad old days when polluters, big businesses that polluted, could externalize the cost so the taxpayers ended up paying for it. It's a very dangerous direction to be going in. I regret that there's talk also of the federal Liberal government going in the same direction.

To carry on with my concerns and reasons — and this government has given us so many ample reasons to know it can't be trusted with the environment — I'm going to give you some more examples of situations that have happened recently which I think all members of this House should be concerned about, because it could happen to them in their communities.

The government has allowed Philip Environmental to go ahead with its Taro landfill without an environmental assessment hearing. Despite major community concern, they have funded the Red Hill Creek Expressway, plowing through vital green space in east Hamilton. They have fired progressive appointees. They have cut the budget of the Niagara Escarpment Commission. They have put forward new proposals to eliminate packaging reduction requirements for businesses. They've watered down sulphur content rules and allowed pulp and paper

companies to keep pouring chlorine into our water. The list goes on and on.

I spoke about some of them yesterday. They removed the ban on new municipal garbage incinerators. They've stopped funding the blue box. Of course, they've ended the Intervenor Funding Project Act, which means that the public will not have the same kind of consultation and ability to participate in a meaningful way in hearings. It's always nice to muzzle your opponents by taking away their funding, and this government is very good at that. The major thrust throughout all of this deregulation is to let the polluters run the show.

I'm going to talk about a few other aspects of the bill that I find problematic. Another thing the bill does is to get rid of the Environmental Compensation Corp. The ECC is a payor of last resort when spills happen and the culprit can't be found. It's true that the ECC has paid out very little money in recent years. I find it a little strange in a way for that to be a reason to get rid of a corporation that's actually not having to pay out that much money. It's true, therefore, that maybe some restructuring would be important to do, but to get rid of it means that some people will be left holding the bag. They will have damage happen to them or their property and nobody will compensate them. Given the other changes the government has made, given its gutting of the rules and the ability of the ministry to enforce them, it is likely that more and more people will be found in the lurch.

I have to wonder if that is the real reason why they have abandoned this program, because right now it has been putting out so very little money, but for the same reason within this bill they're taking away the ability for people to sue as a result of other deregulation, the permit by rule. This is the same thing. They expect that there will be more claims for compensation, because when you look at that in the context of the limited staff and the permit by rule, the government will have far less ability to keep track of who's where in what community. If something does happen, if a spill does happen, I expect it will be harder to find the culprits to pay, and therefore the cost to government could go way up. I think that's the real reason this has been taken away.

The ECC, though, also played an important role in advising the public about spills and about their rights. Many of the people they've helped are people who've tried to clean up or contain spills and been left with liability. The corporation acted in other ways, not just to compensate, but to help track down the culprits and to help people, to steer them in the right direction.

1540

On the repeal of the Ontario Waste Management Corp, that's an interesting one because we support the repeal, obviously, in view of the fact that the corporation no longer exists anyway. It's gone. The government cancelled it a while ago. There was a hearing for many years which we all know about under the OWMC; that's why it was created, to determine how to deal with hazardous waste. At the end of the day — the proposal before them was a very complex one that took years — it was determined that this was not the right direction to go. So it makes sense to repeal this corporation. However, after our government decided not to proceed with the

OWMC, which was rejected by the joint board, we made a decision to maintain the OWMC as a vehicle to promote our hazardous waste reduction strategy. OWMC was used to research and promote hazardous waste 3Rs and research into new technologies.

One of the first things this government did was to axe the OWMC and the hazardous waste reduction strategy. Now the government has no plans whatsoever to deal with hazardous waste. All the funding has been pulled out for hazardous waste reduction and disposal. But we should be very clear about this, and the government should be aware if it isn't: We own, the Ontario government owns, part of the problem on the issue.

Take the issue of PCBs. There are approximately 100,000 tonnes of PCBs in storage around the province. Two thirds of this total are owned by the Ontario government. There are PCBs across the street in the Whitney Block, by the way. I don't know if the parliamentary assistant was aware of that.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I know all about it.

Ms Churley: He knows all about it, he says. There may even be PCBs stored here in this building. I don't know. But we know there are across the street.

Our government had committed several million dollars to begin to take care of this problem. We were going to commercially demonstrate non-incineration technologies to dispose of provincially owned PCB waste. In fact, members here might not be aware — I'm sure the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment would know this, but maybe others don't — that the province is a signatory to the Canada-Ontario agreement. You know about that? Under this agreement, the province has a responsibility to decommission 90% of the high-level PCBs, destroy 50% of the high-level PCB waste now in storage and accelerate the destruction of low-level PCB waste by the year 2000. That's a pretty tall order.

All the programs that were in place — I think he's saying, "No problem" — are gone. All the funding which was in place is gone. I don't see how the government can keep its commitment under this Canada-Ontario agreement. You don't have a plan. They don't have a plan on how to meet their international commitment and they don't have the money set aside to meet their international commitment.

Members might know that there is an Ontario company in Rockwood, Ontario, near the former minister's riding that has produced a non-incineration technology to destroy PCBs and other hazardous waste. The company, which you may have heard of, Eco Logic, has contacts in several countries around the world. I believe it was just yesterday — at least it was in the last couple of days — the federal cabinet approved a plan to open the border to PCB export. This is very bad news. This is the federal Liberals. I must say that I'm not right now talking about the Tory government here. The federal Liberals have agreed to allow PCBs to go across the border. But this is very bad news for companies like Eco Logic. It's very bad news for jobs in the environmental protection sector.

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): Did you mention they're from Wellington?

Ms Churley: They're from Wellington. The member for Wellington is here and he says they're from Wellington, so you should start lobbying your federal member, who I presume is a Liberal.

Mr Arnott: She is.

Ms Churley: She is a Liberal. We should all lobby, but particularly the member for Wellington. This is extremely innovative technology which we need to be promoting in Ontario and indeed in Canada. But what this means is that there will be no incentive, if you're just going to ship the stuff across the border, for companies like Eco Logic to work in this country and I think it's a shame. I'm not sure why the decision was made, but it's a bad decision.

I come back to the government here because we're talking about your bill today and a very serious problem. You do not have plans to deal with hazardous waste. You've cancelled all of the funding, the 3Rs program through the OWMC household hazardous waste programs and product stewardship agreement. All of that is gone. This government has also cancelled funding to the Ontario Waste Exchange, a program where companies could at least exchange their waste; the waste of one company, as it turned out, may in fact be the feedstock for another company. That program is gone.

In fact, when the government took office, the OWMC was working on a consultation to bring all stakeholders together to find a way to meet nationally accepted reduction targets of 50% by the year 2000. Yet when the OWMC was cancelled, they failed to bring in a mechanism to fully implement a hazardous waste strategy.

The government also has cut off grants to businesses in the green industry sector, which were part of the solution. Over a five-year period our government provided \$5 million in support of new hazardous waste treatment technologies. In 1995-96 and 1996-97, we had committed \$5 million per year in loans and, in some cases, grants which were directed to hazardous waste treatment.

But again this is gone. It's not a priority to this government. What is going to happen to all this hazardous waste being produced in our environment? The bottom line is you've dismantled the province's waste reduction strategy. You have nothing in place, you've cancelled the OWMC and all the work they were doing on calling on an amendment to be made in this bill that if not reinstating the OWMC, to build some kind of program that helps with the reduction of hazardous waste in Ontario — very important.

In the long run if the government doesn't invest some money into finding ways to deal with hazardous waste in our communities, again this comes back to the fact that our children, your children and grandkids will be paying a lot more than we'd pay for it today as we try to develop new technologies and try to find ways to deal with the existing hazardous waste.

Bill 57 also expands the ministry's authority to require fees for permit approvals applications, record registration information requests and other matters. Making the polluter pay is a good idea, although I just had a very interesting experience in my community in south Riverdale. You may have read about it. I sent a letter to

the Minister of Environment inviting him to come to a meeting in our community about the Canada Metal plant which had been sued by the government for, I think, the \$8 million clean-up cost in south Riverdale because the Canada Metal plant had contributed in a large part to serious high levels of lead in the soil which actually affected the health of the kids who lived in that area.

An interesting development lately: The new government just very recently decided that they were going to let the company off the hook for \$8 million, which means the taxpayers who've already paid for the cleanup because it had to be done — but now they've been let off the hook, the polluter in that case is not paying for that cleanup. That's setting a very bad precedent and seems to go against the grain of what this government has said, that the taxpayer should not pick up the tab.

Making the polluter pay is good, but what is more worrisome is that fees may become a barrier to those legitimately seeking information from the government. The government has already drawn the criticism of the information commissioner for the imposition of often hefty fees for requests under the freedom of information and privacy act.

1550

The whole idea of making the polluter pay, and the government having the ability to require fees for these permits and approval applications and all those things related to information requests and other matters, in some areas is a very good idea, but there are some problems with it. I think it would be a good idea here for me to refer to an extremely well-written analysis of this bill, Bill 57, by Rick Lindgren from the Canadian Environmental Law Association. He goes through the bill and analyses each section, and he has something to say about the fees and permits. What he would like to see is that these funds should be designated to an environmental fund. In other words, "Revenue generated under the new fee regime may help reduce the provincial deficit, but there is no guarantee that any of the revenue will be used to maintain the MOEE's environmental protection program."

I know, from having been in government and hearing many people say so over time, that there can be a real problem in designating funds to a specific area. I think finance ministers from all governments, from all parties, generally don't like to see that happen for a variety of reasons, and I'm sure it's the case with Mr Eves, the Tory finance minister. But this would not be precedent-setting in terms of a designated environmental fee. As Rick Lindgren says in his document, "On this point, it is noteworthy that other jurisdictions have passed or proposed reforms that establish special environmental funds from revenue received under environmental laws."

This gets very interesting, because there's an Alberta model — in Ralph Klein's Alberta. Based on the Alberta model, the federal standing committee on environment and sustainable development recommended that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act be amended to establish a fund to be administered by Environment Canada and financed through penalties, fines, fees and levies imposed under the act. It's already in Alberta, under their Environmental Protection and Enforcement

Act. It's established in Alberta — a special fund — and now the Canadian government is looking at doing the same.

What is even more interesting is that the Ontario government actually did recently introduce reforms that establish special funds, so it wouldn't even be setting a precedent for this government. You may not be aware of it, but the current Minister of Natural Resources recently tabled reforms that will permit provincial parks to retain and use revenue generated through park fees. Similarly, under Bill 26, the Ontario government recently changed the Game and Fish Act to expressly earmark fines, fees and royalties received under the act for fish and wildlife management purposes.

The recommendation from CELA is: "Bill 57 should be amended to expressly require that any fees paid under the EPA or OWRA shall go into a specific fund or account administered solely by the MOEE and used exclusively for environmental protection purposes. In particular, Bill 57 should include the following provisions," and he provides that information.

I think it's useful to refer to this document in a bit more detail, because the analysis, as I said, is quite good. At the end of the day, after all of the recommendations from CELA, it recommends that there be public hearings on this bill. They are very alarmed by the fact that there are 30 days for public comment. Indeed, many environmentalists and other interested groups, including respected organizations like CELA, had a lot of trouble getting the document in the early days. But because of some of the vital and important changes that are being made here that could add to serious environmental problems, they are requesting that the government require, will agree to, public hearings on this bill.

Another area of concern that this organization expresses quite strongly is the power of the government to charge fees to the public for all kinds of information, including maps, diagrams, studies and reports. The concern is that it yet again shuts out public participation which, as I outlined earlier, has already become a major problem through deregulation under Bill 26 and all kinds of other bills. In fact, it's interesting because it's pointed out in this document by Rick Lindgren that it may not be necessary to do some of this, it may be redundant, because the freedom of information act already applies to many documents that this bill seems to be talking about.

They say: "Similarly, CELA submits that it would be inappropriate to charge fees for public requests for information that the MOEE is obliged to keep or maintain in any event under the EPA or OWRA. Ontario residents have a fundamental right to know particulars about the contaminant sources that the ministry has licensed or has proposed to license within their communities, and this community right to know should not be rendered meaningless through excessive or unreasonable fee requirements. Moreover, financial constraints under Bill 57 could significantly diminish the ability of the public to participate in the environmental decision-making process by impeding full and timely access to all relevant documents."

The government got a lot of money from garbage companies and other polluters during the election cam-

paign. We all know what's happening now: It's payback time. We know about the letter the ministry put out asking the question, "If you could wave a magic wand and get rid of regulations, what would they be?" We also know, from analysing the documents, the bills that have come forward, it's very clear that the environmental groups, environmental lawyers and people engaged in environmental protection in the communities have not been listened to on the whole. What this means in the long run is that people are going to be less involved in the process and they're going to know less about their local environment and how it's going to affect their health or the health of those around them.

It would be very shameful indeed if this government's zeal to pass on costs to those who can least afford them led to health problems because high fees deterred people from finding out basic information about local activities.

1600

I see the parliamentary assistant is listening attentively to that. In all seriousness I hope that he will take a look, because I believe, at least the way it's worded now — and perhaps this is not the government's intent — the costs could be so high that ordinary citizens and environmental groups trying to protect something in their community may not be able to afford access to important documents to find out what's going on. I hope you will commit to take a look at that. I should say here too to the parliamentary assistant that I hope he will use his influence with the minister to make sure that we have public hearings on this bill.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): Doug Galt's running for Speaker, so for you, Dr Speaker.

Ms Churley: You're not running for Speaker, are you? I will say in all seriousness to the parliamentary assistant —

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Please address the Chair.

Ms Churley: I will say, through you, Mr Speaker, to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment and Energy that people will catch on. I talked about this yesterday. They will catch on. Protecting the environment is part of the culture of Ontario now. It may be easy to hit welfare recipients because there's unfortunately perhaps not the same level of concern throughout all aspects of society. But, Mr Speaker, through you, I do want to warn the government that even Tories in their ridings care about the environment and environmental protection.

It may not be showing up on the top of the list of people's concerns right now for a variety of reasons. I think, number one, people are so bombarded with so many changes and cuts and deregulation across the board that people aren't aware of what's going on. But I think another reason is that they aren't aware specifically because there's so much going on in the area of the environment. Fortunately, to date, partially because it's too soon, nothing really big has happened to point directly to how this deregulation and cuts affect them in their own neighbourhood. It will happen. Unfortunately, it will happen.

I suppose the closest we have at this point right now is what's happening in Temagami and the fact that the

government is being taken to court right now. The government is allowing the loggers to go in and cut trees without adhering, which, under the law, through the long class action hearing on that particular subject, timber management — very long hearing, took a long, long time. It brought everybody together and they sat down and worked very hard to reach a compromise. Believe me, it was very difficult.

Out of those hearings came a direction. It was a compromise. People say, "Oh, these environmentalists, they don't care about jobs and the economy and all of that." But they're talking about the fact that there's only 2% of those old-growth forests left and there are rules laid down under the law under those hearings that this government is ignoring and telling loggers that they can go in and log. I think it's going to be very interesting to see what happens in the court case around that.

I am going to read you a letter in closing that I referred to earlier. It's taken from the *Globe and Mail* and it was dated August 27. The title of this letter is "The Harris Axe." It says:

"One can measure the degeneration of a civil society by the culture of lying its political office holders develop.

"In his latest public announcement on the direction of Ontario's government, Premier Mike Harris says that 'We want to send an important message to Ontarians that protecting the environment for the future generations ranks equally with us as the fiscal situation for future generations.' (Cabinet Shuffle a Tune-Up, Harris Says — Aug 17).

"Yet the Harris government has, in fact, already systematically stripped the province of half a century of environmental protections and programs. It has gutted the monitoring and scientific staffs of the province's developed forest management, and opened Ontario's last old-growth forests to industrial logging. It has abolished government inspections and procedures that ensured mine industry cleanups of their wastes and prevention of environmental hazards. It has axed funding to conservation authorities by 70% and lakes research and cleanup projects by a planned 50%. It has begun wholesale reduction of Ontario's 80 regulations on toxic pollution. It has clawed back \$100 million from government financial support of municipal water and sewage projects and beach cleanups. It has instituted mechanisms for selloff of public conservation areas and natural habitats to replace the funding it cut off to municipalities and conservation authorities. It has slashed all budgets for enforcement of still existing environmental laws. It has abandoned funding for blue box and other recycling programs. It has repealed Planning Act regulations on commercial development of rural lands and proposes to deregulate commercial shoreline development. And it has, finally, announced in recent days this government's intention to, in the words of environmental experts, 'gut Ontario's environmental review process' by changes to the Environmental Assessment Act (Ontario Pushing New Environmental Law — August 8).

"In short, while promising to 'protect the environment of Ontario for future generations,' the Harris regime is in fact taking a broad-axe to the entire system of environmental protection and preservation in the province with

a blindness to consequences. This is a government driven by a lapsed ideological program to which environmental responsibility is alien. While its leader seems perfectly willing to lie to the public to conceal this life-destructive agenda, neither he nor most Ontarians appear to have wakened up to what the track record already clearly tells us."

That letter is by John McMurtry, Guelph, Ontario. That letter sums up, I think, a great deal, very succinctly, what I think more and more people in the province of Ontario are seeing from this government.

I will end by saying once again, and I believe I began with this yesterday, that the government is starting to look very foolish indeed telling people over and over again what the spin doctors write for them, that, "Oh, no, We are actually furthering, enhancing environmental protection while we cut this here and deregulate that there, while we take all the major environmental protection bills," like the Environmental Assessment Act, the new regulatory changes, the land planning act — and those are just a few. You add them all up and people — that's just a partial list that I read out here. People are going to get wise, and I believe they are getting wise now, to what is really going on.

I would say to the new minister, who was here yesterday to hear some of my speech, and we will be talking later, we need hearings on this Bill 57, we demand hearings on this Bill 57, and if there aren't hearings on this Bill 57, there are going to be a lot of difficulties created for the minister and this government.

They like to say to people that this is just about cutting red tape and being more efficient. It is far more than that, as I outlined in my speech today. I spent more time yesterday talking about the overall agenda. Today I got into more detail. It might have sounded boring at times, but I think it's important to put on the record what is really happening in this bill.

I will say to the minister again what I said yesterday. When he stood up and introduced this bill for second reading yesterday, he made a point of saying that he was following in the same direction as the previous minister. That bodes badly for the new minister. He had an opportunity to say yesterday: "I see that this is a chance to set some new directions, that we're very serious about protecting the environment. I'm going to let this bill go out for public hearings, or I will even withdraw it so I will have more time to review it."

We're going into clause-by-clause I believe starting next week on the EA bill, and it is my understanding, even though the minister asked for more time to review it, that there are no substantive changes in that bill. I'm very disappointed to see that and I say to the minister today that the people of Ontario are going to catch on and the time has come now to tell the people of Ontario that there's going to be a new direction from this government.

The Acting Speaker: Time has expired. Questions or comments?

Mr Galt: My compliments to the NDP critic for her 90-minute-plus speech, which really didn't contain too much. But I was disappointed that she would make reference to the Premier in the way that she did. I think

she could have had more respect for the office and for the House in making reference in that way.

1610

I was particularly pleased that she made reference to the PCB issue. That particular one she mentioned being in Whitney Block — she might be interested to know it's in some 1,500 more locations around Ontario, thousands of tonnes of PCBs that we'd like to have destroyed. There is an excellent new system, process, going on — it's in St Catharines — Eco Logic is carrying it out, but it's because of the complicated hearings and process that are in place from previous governments that are impeding organizations like this from doing good research and from getting it out and using it.

It's a simple reduction process that's all enclosed. You add a little bit of heat. Things like methane come off that can be burned to add more heat, hydrochloric acid that can be sold, along with water. There is no smokestack. You should be very happy about it, and I would have thought your government, concerned about PCBs, would have gotten on changing all these regulations so it could have done something about an issue that you were very, very concerned about. Just there in PCBs alone — and there are so many other points in your speech that I could respond to, but I think that one really sums up the whole thing.

It's got so complicated from your government that to come in with certificates of approval and to apply for them, you had to develop guidance manuals, first on how to apply and how to review. That's how absurd the certificate of approval circumstance became with your government.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I would like to commend the member for Riverdale for her essential defence of environmental issues that really are threatened by this government, and it's basically being threatened in part by this bill. I know the member for Riverdale has been in the front lines in her own community of Riverdale about face-to-face environmental issues in downtown Toronto, and I know as a member of city of Toronto council she was involved very much. So it's not an issue she's come to by accident. She's been, as I say, there right from day one. I think a lot of her comments certainly deserve some attention.

A lot of you have never had to face serious environmental impacts in your own neighbourhoods; you've had that luxury. But if you do have a serious environmental problem in your neighbourhood like they've had in Riverdale, because of the mistakes of the past, because governments didn't take a role in the government in the 1940s and 1950s, then it becomes a very serious issue.

That's why I think the member is right on when she says this government is going in the wrong direction. It's trying to bring back the attitudes of the 1940s and 1950s and that is not going to help the economy, it's not going to help the environment and it's not going to make this province one of the leading provinces in terms of environmental protection, in terms of economic prosperity, in terms of a good place to live. I certainly support many of her comments and I hope she continues to vigorously support environmental initiatives, environmental protection, no matter what this government tries to do in terms of dismantling these protections.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I also want to rise and compliment my colleague the member for Riverdale for her detailed understanding of the damage that this bill will do. I can recall when we were first elected government in 1990, the member for Riverdale was appointed the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour —

Ms Churley: I wanted to be the minister, but —

Mr Christopherson: She says she wants to be the Minister of Environment. That's the next time around. I'm sure that will yet happen.

The member for Riverdale could never, ever live in the cabinet of Mike Harris as they attack and dismantle communities through the kinds of legislation you have here. I assure you of that. You don't have enough to entice her over there. The fact of the matter is that you ought to be paying a lot more attention, rather than just heckling and rolling your eyes and being stuck over on your hard-line ideology. The fact of the matter is, this is a member who has great experience in this area, not only as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment but also as a cabinet minister after that, in the other part of our term in office. I can recall her debate and involvement and engagement at the cabinet table, fighting for the right of our environment to be protected.

You want to talk about communities? Again, opposition members roll their eyes and talk about 10-speed tree huggers and all kinds of phrases. The fact of the matter is —

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: Well, that's the kind of phrases some of you like to use. The fact of the matter is that the member was also a former member of Toronto council who understands very clearly the planning process and the impact of not protecting the environment and the impact on the lives and quality of families. She called on the Minister of Health to pay attention, that this is a public health issue. All those things are reasons why government members ought to listen to the member for Riverdale. She knows a heck of a lot more about this stuff than you ever will.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): What we have listened to for the last several minutes today, and what we finished the day with yesterday, has been the usual litany of accusations and posturing in this case on the part of my friend the member for Riverdale on the subject of the environment and the government's environmental policies, putting forward the basic proposition which we're accustomed to hearing about in this place these days that more money spent by the government equates to more concern on the part of the person doing the spending and the more complex the regulations the greater the control and the greater the effectiveness of the policy that's being implemented.

I hear my friend from Hamilton comment on the tree huggers. I wonder if my fellow tree huggers would agree with me that we would do better to save the trees in our environment if we would cut down on the paperwork that's required in compliance with the regulations that are currently in place to comply with the laws that this government inherited from the previous government and the complex regulations that we are all ensnared in in

order to comply with the requirements we faced when we took office.

We hear the stories about the draconian cuts and we hear the stories about how this government doesn't care and we are eradicating this and showing no concern for the environment. That's not what this bill is about. What this bill is about is streamlining and focusing the regulatory process so we can more appropriately be stewards of the public's resources and put those resources more effectively to work doing the job we want them to do. We hardly do anybody any favours when we spend a lot of money spinning our wheels simply regulating ourselves. The name of the game here is to focus the regulatory efforts on doing the job that has to be done, and that's the effect of this bill.

The Acting Speaker: You have two minutes to reply.

Ms Churley: I want to thank my colleagues from Northumberland, Oakwood, Hamilton Centre and York East. The member for York East just repeated the mantra that I talked about earlier. He's read the material; he knows what to say. I don't think, unfortunately, that anybody from that side of the House really listened to what I had to say. I suppose they don't believe that what I have to say is of any value. Okay, I accept that, I guess. I'm the opposition. According to you, what do I know about environmental protection?

My colleague from Hamilton Centre I think gave a fair analysis of some of my background. I feel I've got something relevant to say about this. I feel the members aren't listening and are not accepting the fact that there are problems in this bill and that you need — because the cabinet isn't going to do it, and you as the backbenchers and the parliamentary assistants have to fight for environmental protection. You shouldn't be up there just repeating the mantra that you've been given by the ministry. I'm really surprised at you, because the member for York East should know better. He knows that this is not just about cutting regulation.

When I hear the member for Northumberland talk about picking out one specific area on Eco Logic, which I support very much, but missing the whole point of my argument that environmentalists and others across the province make time and time again — this government is the first government from all three parties, since the early days of environmental protection, that is actually going backwards. You can pick and choose areas where we failed and should have done better, and the Liberals and Bill Davis's Tories before us. The fact is you guys are going backwards.

1620

The Acting Speaker: Any further debate?

Mr Galt: I've picked up a new line here this afternoon and that's to have a 10-speed tree hugger. I didn't know they had got up to that many speeds. I'm sure if the NDP had stayed in government we'd have had a 24-speed tree hugger before long, but now I know there are 10-speeders out there.

It's interesting the comments about the new minister, and I think it's interesting his comments the other day and the position he has been taking with the environment. A man who is very well educated as an engineer and as a lawyer, he recognizes the importance of the environ-

ment, has said it on many occasions, and he also recognizes the needs for the environment and what has been going on with this government with the environment and recognizes what the previous minister has been doing to enhance environmental protection.

I note with interest that in the previous 90-minute speech, most of the time we were off topic, so it was a little hard just to follow all the time, but I did pay attention most of the time and noticing the fact that it was off topic most of the time would indicate there wasn't too much wrong with this bill, and therefore, I interpret being off topic most of the time as a vote of confidence for Bill 57.

I'm actually surprised the opposition is concerned about it, because if you analyse this bill — now please listen — we're actually going to increase the number of regulations, and I thought that would make you very excited. We hope they're very clear, the certainty within those, and we'll try our very best to make sure they are. But to get the standardized approval, we will need definitive regulations to accomplish that rather than in the past, the willy-nilly, whatever the interpretation is of the bureaucrat who happens to be looking at it, laying down the regulations for the time.

I'm certainly pleased to have this opportunity to be able to discuss Bill 57 in the House with the members of this Legislature. The Environmental Approvals Improvement Act, you will recall, received its first reading on June 3, 1996. I know that my honourable colleagues share this government's desire to ensure the protection of the environment for generations to come. We all recognize the need to be able to live, work and raise families in healthy communities. We need to be able to sustain a good standard of living without sacrificing the quality of our air, water and land.

I also believe that Bill 57 will help us to achieve our environmental goals by making Ontario's approvals system more workable. When the system is more workable, we'll be a more effective protector of our environment. Effective protection, after all, is what approvals are all about. If they are not workable and if red tape overwhelms the process, then projects get delayed. At worst, this can lead to situations where people try to circumvent the process entirely at the expense of the environment, which is most unfortunate and which we want to prevent.

These delays, of course, do nothing to further the cause of environmental protection. This is the situation that we want to put an end to. That is why we have introduced Bill 57 and especially its provision for standardized approval for certain classes of projects.

In introducing Bill 57 today, I would like to take you through in some detail the provisions laid out in Bill 57. The bill contains amendments to legislative acts administered by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, primarily the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act.

These amendments will do four things:

First, they will close a government agency, the Environmental Compensation Corp, and get the ministry out of the spills compensation business, maybe something they never should have been in in the first place.

Second, the amendments cut red tape in the approvals process without compromising in any way on the high standards of environmental protection currently enjoyed by Ontarians.

Third, the Ministry of Environment and Energy is being given the ability to recover the costs of administering some of its permits and record-keeping programs.

Fourth, the amendments lower the final curtain on a 15-year epic that cost taxpayers \$145 million. I'm speaking here, of course, of the Ontario Waste Management Corp and the futile yet costly search for hazardous waste solutions.

Just a quick overview of this bill: The initiatives I have just referred to are organized under four parts in Bill 57.

Part I contains amendments to the Environmental Protection Act: puts spills compensation into the exclusive domain of the court system, where it really belongs; the expansion of standardized approvals regulation will cut red tape and impose commonality on the approvals system; gives the ministry the ability to recover costs.

Part II amends the Ontario Water Resources Act to make similar provisions for standardized approvals, cost recovery and greater clarity in regulatory framework.

Part III repeals the Ontario Waste Management Corp Act.

Part IV addresses some transitional matters.

I will now take you through each of the above parts of the bill. I apologize if this material is a bit on the dry side, but everyone here understands the importance of taking a fine-tooth comb to legislation affecting the environment and human health in Ontario, and I can assure you that I will stay on topic.

In Part I, the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act, section 1 contains a series of amendments that will remove from the Environmental Protection Act all existing sections that are related to the provision of crown compensation for loss or damage incurred as a result of spills to the environment.

When it was proclaimed in 1985, part X of the Environmental Protection Act made the owners and controllers of spilled substances responsible for cleanup, restoration and compensation, regardless of who was actually responsible for causing the spill. Part X also required the reporting of spills to the Ministry of Environment and Energy and to other relevant authorities.

This was indeed an important development for environmental protection in Ontario. It is intended to avoid situations where various parties involved in a spill stand around arguing about who is to blame, rather than taking the necessary action to get it cleaned up. These provisions are working. I want to emphasize here that we're not proposing to change them or to remove the responsibilities put on owners and controllers. We feel, however, that these are key parts to the legislation that make an important contribution to environmental protection.

The act also established an agency to administer a crown compensation program, the Environmental Compensation Corp. The Environmental Compensation Corp is a very small agency. However small, though, it has cost the taxpayers of this province some \$2.8 million to operate the corporation during the past 10 years. During all of that time, the corporation has only authorized

compensation of about \$688,000, to a total of 89 applicants. As the minister pointed out earlier, the operation costs of the corporation have amounted to over four times the amount of compensation funds that have been meted out. This does not really add up to common sense. This government does not consider it appropriate to use tax dollars for providing compensation in this way.

We are therefore proposing to get the business of compensation back into the courts by removing the provisions that enable individuals, businesses and municipalities to apply for crown compensation as a last resort, that is, where they have been unable to get the owner and/or the controller to compensate them or where the liable party cannot be traced. These amendments will terminate the Environmental Compensation Corp. The actual windup of the corporation is covered in part IV of the bill.

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However, part I deals with several transitional matters related to the closing down of the ECC. For example, it will transfer to the crown the corporation's powers to recover the compensation already paid out, for instance, from a liable party who should have paid but refused to do so. It will require the repayment of compensation to the crown where appropriate. An example of this is a situation where the corporation awarded an applicant a portion of their claim so that he or she could use it to take court action against the liable party. If the court action is successful and the claimant receives a full settlement, it is only fair to the taxpayer that the compensation received through the corporation is returned. Part I will also continue certain confidentiality provisions for corporation members and staff when they become former members and staff.

Again I want to emphasize here that these amendments will have no adverse environmental impact. The responsibilities imposed on owners and controllers by part X to clean up, to restore and to compensate remain firmly in place; they will not change in any way. But the ministry itself is getting out of the business of providing compensation. We believe that the best interests of the environment will be served by devoting our energies and resources to other, more crucial areas.

Turning now to the second section of part I, section 2 provides the Ministry of Environment and Energy with regulation-making authority for standardized approvals and for the charging of fees to recover costs. Standardized approval is an important concept and one which this government believes will help modernize approvals and make them do the job they are supposed to do: Protect the environment and the health of our communities. Standardized approvals represent an updated approach to the certificate-of-approval process which the ministry administers under the province's two main pieces of legislation protecting the environment: the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act.

As I mentioned just a few moments ago, part I of Bill 57 covers the necessary amendments to the Environmental Protection Act. Part II contains the amendments to the Ontario Water Resources Act, which we will come to in just a few moments; they will be very much the same as those I'm about to describe.

Currently under the Environmental Protection Act, any activity which could potentially result in emissions or discharge of any kind being released into the natural environment requires a certificate of approval. But the current legislation does not allow us to differentiate between the approvals required to operate a little restaurant exhaust fan and a giant smelter. This means that sometimes we need to go through costly and lengthy approvals processes for fairly common and mundane kinds of activities. It is the equivalent of trying to use a sledgehammer to kill a fly. We need processes which are adapted towards achieving appropriate and efficient results. The current legislation is unwieldy and inflexible in the extreme.

Taken in its true legal sense, the current Environmental Protection Act could arguably be interpreted to mean that you require a certificate of approval to install bathroom vents in your homes. Consequently, just before you left home this morning, running your bathroom fan without a certificate of approval was really breaking the law. Farmers: Technically, if you look at the Environmental Protection Act, every livestock barn they have with a fan on it should have a certificate of approval, according to present legislation, which really doesn't make too much sense. This would, of course, be an absurd way of using up and taking up ministry resources. The definitions in the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act are so broad that they capture virtually any individual or activity.

What we are doing here is developing a legislative approach that sets out the appropriate process and the level of direct government review for different classes of activities. Each standardized approval regulation would be customized to the activity it regulates. The amendments proposed will enable classes of activities, people or things to be exempted from the certificate of approvals process. Of course, the amendments will also enable conditions or rules to be attached to the exemption to ensure that all aspects of a project are covered off in terms of their potential to adversely affect the environment.

Under this approach, the proponents of specific classes of activities will be able to proceed in accordance with environmental rules established by regulation. They will not need to apply for a specific certificate of approval and tie up horrendous quantities of the ministry's resources.

I'll give you an example of this principle under the Ontario Water Resources Act. In governing the municipal sewage system, individual certificates of approval have to date been required when a new home is built that is connected to the existing infrastructure. As you can imagine, this is a very common kind of activity. Furthermore, the municipalities all currently review the design and the specific applications of every pipe and are ultimately responsible for the operation and its maintenance. The province's involvement is therefore totally redundant but still required by the law. This regulation-making power will provide us with the flexibility to deal with that situation by providing an exemption with appropriate conditions attached.

I want to underline here the fact that the amendments will provide the necessary regulation-making authority.

They will not specify the types or classes of activities to be covered. The regulations themselves will be developed later, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders. Consultation is an important concept for this government because we believe in listening to those who know best: those stakeholders who are involved in the environment.

We reject the view that government always knows best, something like the previous government that was in this House. We will hold consultations with both industrial and environmental groups. This process will examine the classes of activities to be covered by standardized approvals and the rules to be imposed on each class.

Broad public consultation will be conducted by means of an electronic registry created through the Environmental Bill of Rights. Any citizen of Ontario can call in at 1-800-667-9979, or by accessing the government of Ontario site on the World Wide Web.

An important consideration in the development of the proposed amendments we are discussing today was making sure that they do not lower our standards of environmental protection. The environment must not and will not be compromised in any way. The Minister of Environment and Energy, the Honourable Norm Sterling, has gone on record to state that the Ontario government is firmly committed to maintaining and, wherever possible, improving upon the high standard of environmental protection enjoyed by the citizens of this province.

As Mr Sterling has said: "We need a balance between the environment and the economy. But if it comes to a choice, the environment must be protected. The Minister of Environment and Energy will be the province's chief environmental guardian." I do not think he could have made this point any clearer.

Returning to standardized approvals, they will allow the same standard of environmental protection to be applied via regulation rather than be imposed on each individual certificate of approval. Cutting red tape also helps us achieve another governmental goal: getting out of the job of micromanaging, which the previous government seemed to have great expertise in. The ministry cannot be efficient when it is busy dealing with fine details, with telling industry not only what standards to meet but also how to meet them. The proper role of the Ministry of Environment and Energy is setting and enforcing strong environmental standards.

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Standardized approvals also are good news for the public. They do not affect the ability of the Ministry of Environment and Energy to obtain compliance from dischargers or prosecute those who do not comply with provincial environmental requirements.

For the ministry, this more workable system of approvals will lessen the workload in non-essential areas and allow us to focus on our core businesses.

We are calling this approach "standardized approvals" because we believe that to be a better name than "permit by rule," as it has commonly been known in the past.

This approach will not be used for all classes of activities requiring a ministry certificate of approval. It is appropriate only for activities where the environmental implications are well understood and predictable and the impacts can be mitigated through the application of

standardized rules or conditions. All other classes of activities will continue to require a certificate of approval.

The rules imposed via regulation may include notification to the ministry of the activity and a requirement to pay a fee associated with this notification. The amount of these fees has not yet been determined.

I should point out here that the use of standardized approvals is not new. We are not reinventing the wheel with these amendments. The legislative authority for standardized approvals already exists with respect to part V of the Environmental Protection Act, which governs waste sites and systems. This authority was introduced by the previous government. Our predecessors obviously recognized it as a sound concept for appropriate activities, and I understand that's why they're quite supportive of this bill. We do not always agree with our predecessors, but in this case, we do. It is a case of the exception proving the rule.

Two such regulations have been enacted by the previous government: regulation 101/94, recycling and composting of municipal waste; and regulation 501/92, selected waste depots. I'd recommend that to their reading.

This approach is working very well. That is why we are expanding it to other approvals required under the Environmental Protection Act, primarily with respect to air emissions. We are looking out for what is in the best interests of the environment. This, again, is part of our government's commitment to taking a commonsense approach to all aspects of environmental protection.

Looking at cost recovery, earlier I mentioned a possible requirement to provide notification and to pay a fee associated with a standardized approval. The ministry already has a variety of legislative authorities to charge fees relating to certificates of approval, examination, licences, permits and the provision of copies of documents, plans or drawings.

Amendments are proposed to consolidate these existing legislative authorities and provide the Ministry of Environment and Energy with a broad general fee-making capability. Specifically, these amendments would expand the existing fee-making authority to allow fees for any registration or record required by the legislation or regulations, and fees for the provision of information, services or recordings by the ministry.

With this authority, we will be able to introduce fees to recover administrative costs in areas such as generator registration and waste manifests. These two systems track hazardous and liquid industrial waste from generation to disposal. By imposing fees, we will ensure that the costs of administering the systems are paid by those who produce and handle the waste. This is only fair.

The principle at work here is consistent with the government policy; namely, that the ministries operate as far as possible on a cost recovery basis. Only those who use the programs will be required to pay for them.

Under part II, amendments to the Ontario Water Resources Act: As I mentioned earlier, this part of the bill essentially does for the Ontario Water Resources Act what part I does for the Environmental Protection Act in terms of providing the regulation-making authority for standardized approval and cost recovery. Standardized approvals, under the Ontario Water Resources Act, will

apply to things such as water and sewage works, as I referenced in my earlier example.

We are also looking into the concept of charging fees for the recovery of administrative costs for obtaining water well records and permits to take water. These do not represent any kind of levy on the general public. Fees will be paid only by those who benefit from the services provided.

An amendment also clarifies an existing provision whereby drainage or sewage works carried out under the Drainage Act are exempt from the requirement for an approval under the Ontario Water Resources Act. The current exemption was originally intended to deal with strictly agricultural activities. We have found, however, that it is being used for subdivision development on former agricultural lands.

It was never intended that stormwater drainage for land development purposes be exempted. An amendment is proposed to clarify this.

Once this exemption is clarified, the standardized approval approach can be implemented for stormwater drainage. In this way we will be able to distinguish between agricultural, and development for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

Many of the amendments are a simple matter of housekeeping. The introduction of our proposed amendments requires some tidying up of existing regulation-making authorities under both the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act.

The housekeeping amendments pertain to consolidating existing authorities for fee-making, the classification of activities, people or things and the exemption of activities, people or things. These changes are meant to improve the organization of the acts so that the legislation will be easier to use in the future. Again it gets back to the ideas of making everything to do with environmental protection more workable.

Repeal of the Ontario Waste Management Corporation Act: The ministry is proposing to repeal the Ontario Waste Management Corporation Act to lower the final curtain on this corporation, which cost \$145 million over 15 years. As everyone here is aware, the Ontario Waste Management Corp was given a mandate to find solutions for hazardous waste management issues within the province. A site in West Lincoln was selected and a lengthy environmental assessment hearing was undertaken.

Unfortunately, with the vagaries and uncertainty of our EA process in full view, the corporation's efforts ultimately failed. The corporation ceased operations in October 1995, following an announcement in July 1995 that it was being terminated.

Repeal of the act is a final formality. It simply ties up some loose ends. The experience with the Ontario Waste Management Corp was also one of the key motivations behind the long-overdue environmental assessment reforms that we have introduced.

Part IV contains the transitional items I referred to earlier. With the exception of section 1 of the bill, these amendments will come into force on the day the bill receives royal assent. Section 1 removes government compensation for spills and terminates the Environmental

Compensation Corp. We can assure members that all claims received by the date the bill was introduced will be considered. However, the bill cuts off any new corporation business by providing that claims received after the day this bill is introduced will not be considered. Part IV also provides that section I comes into force when it is proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor.

The final section of Bill 57 is the short title of the act, Environmental Approvals Improvement Act, 1996.

I believe this act is good news for the people of Ontario because it shows that our government is serious about delivering the maximum environmental benefit for the taxpayers' dollars. Bill 57 will help ensure that the public receives this environmental protection benefit through a modernized approvals process that is more workable and better able to serve its intended purpose: Protecting the environment and keeping the communities of this province clean and healthy.

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I would like to thank the honourable members for bearing with me. I know we are dealing with rather dry material here, but my colleagues understand the need to go through it and to understand this bill. Thank you very much for the 30 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Questions or comments?

Mr Colle: I want to say to the member for Northumberland that he obviously has done a lot of work in making his presentation. It is certainly a very thorough analysis of, as he said, a very complex piece of legislation and I want to commend him for that. I know he is sincere in what he's saying and what he's trying to explain in the bill.

I just have a couple of comments that I think have to be put in perspective. I know you talk about the fact that the government believes in wide consultation and public input, yet my understanding of it is that the minister has not agreed to public hearings and that, to me, is astonishing. Maybe there's a mistake here. Perhaps I haven't received the information, but my understanding is that to this point the minister's refusing any public hearings. Maybe the member could explain that to me; why, if they're so anxious for broad public consultation, they wouldn't allow for public hearings.

I'm also very concerned about the fact that the minister is talking about setting up another one of these 1-800 numbers. I don't think that's going to do it for public consultation. You just can't replace people talking to people face to face with these 1-800 numbers that may satisfy the mandarins in the environmental office there at St Clair and Avenue Road, but you need more than these electronic numbers and, as you said, electronic registries. I think you need a formalized process where people can give their concerns and their concerns, I think, are going to come up because you are making some pretty dramatic changes.

Again, I thank the member for his remarks, but I certainly hope he pushes for public hearings on this bill.

Ms Churley: I appreciate the comments made by the parliamentary assistant. I don't have time to argue all the points and I believe we had a bit of an opportunity to hear each other out and we have major disagreements

about the implications of this bill, but I'm going to concentrate on his comments about public participation and consultation and say to him that if he's serious about that, he will announce today or Monday that there will be public hearings on this bill. It is vital. People are calling for it and want it.

I want to comment though and say that he is wrong to give the impression that this government wants more public participation and consultation. They are taking those rights away more and more. The intervenor funding program is gone. They haven't replaced it with anything. That's a huge impediment to people trying to participate in major EA hearings.

But having said that, if the government goes through and guts EA the way it's written now, if they don't make a major amendment which, to date, we haven't seen, it means there might not even be hearings on things like garbage dumps or full EA hearings which, I might add, the Premier once promised and now he has backed down. That will be a problem.

They have been limiting the use of the Environmental Bill of Rights which started with Bill 26. In fact, even Eva Ligeti, the Environmental Commissioner, was so alarmed that she did an unprecedented thing and presented a special report to the Speaker at the time outlining her concern. Also now on this bill the government is imposing economic barriers to public access, to MOEE and the services. Their fee regime is giving them vague new powers to charge for anything, so overall this government is limiting substantively access to information and consultation and participation.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the member's speech. I was watching it carefully on the monitor, and I tried to be reassured that the government wasn't moving in the direction of watering down its environmental protection in the province. The member did a credible job of attempting to alleviate those concerns, but I still have them, because I think this bill cannot be looked at as a bill by itself but in the context of everything the government is doing in the field in the environment, and every piece of legislation, every regulation and every policy so far has been designed to weaken the environment.

I understand it, because when you go to your fund-raisers, the people who are there are people who have a vested interest, at least for their business, in shoving aside the environment because it gets in their way. There's no question. I know it gets in the way of people. I used to listen to people who would make complaints about the environment on many occasions and it's most unfortunate because this bill, the speeding up of approvals — in certain circumstances some of the impediments you removed are reasonable and we've said that, but in many of the circumstances, we're going to find they're not reasonable and that by not following the small-c conservative way of taking extra time, being extra cautious, we're going to find that governments are making mistakes.

I know the NDP will be next in responding to this, and they may say some of the same things, because I know the member for Etobicoke wishes to respond as well, and I know the NDP is going to get up and respond to his speech.

What I want to ensure is that the government isn't moving in the opposite direction, and my great fear, with all the goodwill of the parliamentary assistant, with all the goodwill of the minister, those in the Premier's office and the Premier himself want to move towards making it more business-friendly, and that means, of course, weakening environmental protection.

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): I noticed the member for St Catharines did his best to ensure that I didn't get up to respond. I'm quite happy I did, and I thank the members opposite in the NDP caucus.

It is curious though, isn't it, when the member for St Catharines stands in his place and says, "Look, I understand why these people are moving forward on their environmental issues this way, because the people who fill up their coffers are the ones who want to see the environment pushed aside"?

The argument could be made by some cynical sort out there — not by myself, but by some cynical sort — that maybe when the Minister of the Environment was the member for St Catharines he was pushing forward these environmental concerns and his particular political coffers were being filled by those people who wanted to see the environmental protection and agencies beefed up to levels that were virtually unreasonable; unreasonable.

Mr Colle: They don't have any money, they're all on bicycles.

Mr Stockwell: I'm not so sure if they didn't have any money or if maybe it was politically a stunt, because I recall in that election of 1990, when the member for St Catharines had his government turfed out, that the environment people turned on the minister, turned on the Premier. They went down to his initial launch, and they claimed he didn't do anything for the environment, that he was wrecking the environment, that it was a terrible administration.

I know first hand from my friend the member for St Catharines that his record in the environment ministry was probably exemplary, but let's be clear: Those people who this member speaks for today, they're never satisfied. They weren't satisfied when the Liberals spent billions and billions of tax dollars building up regulations, building up red tape, slowing down development and grinding this province to a halt. They weren't satisfied when the NDP were in power, for heaven's sake. They spoke loud and long against the government.

Now we're in power, they're not satisfied, and we hear on the opposition benches how irresponsible we are. Let's be clear: We've all had a kick at this can, and they've all decided that we're all apparently irresponsible and you were no better seen in their eyes than us.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member wish to respond?

1700

Mr Galt: Thank you for the responses that I've been listening to. Certainly this government has been a government of consultation. It went on for many years prior to the election. It's been going on ever since.

They were making reference to the reg reform that I've been guiding through the Ministry of Environment and Energy. We approached some 200 organizations, particular stakeholders — we may have missed a few; that's

possible — inviting them to contribute to what we were doing. I actually sat and listened to some 25 groups, some for up to three hours. I believe that's consultation and listening. After we listened, we put it to paper, we wrote some of their ideas down, and they're jumping all over us because we wrote down some of these ideas that people presented to us. We now have it out for some 75 days for a response. Then we'll further look at it and come up with ideas and ways to protect the environment and to work with it.

As far as public hearings on this bill, there's been no discussion — I don't know where you're getting the idea that there won't be any public hearings on this particular bill.

Economic concerns: Yes, there are all kinds of economic concerns. There have to be with the way that money has been spent in this province over the past 10 years. This is a government that has real concerns about social programs. If you only look at them today, we're going to be out of money. There won't be any money for environment, there won't be any money for welfare, there won't be any money for education, there won't be any money for health if we keep spending at the rate that you guys have been spending for the last 10 years. It just won't be there.

With health and the interest on the debt today, that's over 50%. There's only 48% left for anything else. Very quickly we're going to be over \$10 billion a year in interest payments alone. That's where the previous two governments have put us and that's why we have some economic concerns, so there will be some social programs down the road.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Colle: Unlike the member for Northumberland, I'm going to speak about Bill 57. I noticed he started talking in defence of his tax cut giveaway and how that's going to solve all the problems and that's going to create a good social net for everyone, but the problem is that people see that it's destructive more than anything else.

In terms of Bill 57, the general thrust of the bill in terms of the original intention is one that deserves some merit. In other words, I can see where the ministry looked at certainly the vast volumes of let's say regulation and bureaucratic machinations dealing with the environmental regulation and realized perhaps there should be some focus to it. I think that was the original motive perhaps, but the original motive got tied in with the government's ideological bent and the way they've treated the environment as a government since they've been here for the last year. So I think you've got sort of a Hekyll and —

Mr Christopherson: Jekyll and Hyde.

Mr Colle: Jekyll and Hyde. It's been a long time.

It's a bit of a schizophrenic attempt to try to deal with the problem. On the one hand, there is some attempt to essentially make things more manageable. On the other hand, it also fits into this government's belief that the environment and people who want to protect it are somehow an encumbrance to economic vitality in terms of governing this province. I think that's where the flaws are in Bill 57.

In looking at some of the analysis done of this bill by, I would think, people who have expertise in this complex area of environmental management, I want to refer to Paul Muldoon, who's a lawyer with the Canadian Environmental Law Association. In looking at this bill, what he's most concerned about is that in the area of house-keeping, as the member said, there are some pretty significant changes taking place.

First of all, the effect of some of these proposals would be to remove reporting requirements for industrial polluters that may indicate whether their discharges might cause long-term harm. I'm just concerned whether that is in the long run going to be to the benefit of the people of Ontario. Also, if you get into the requirements for pulp and paper makers to plant, they may be allowed to eliminate reporting certain toxic water emissions.

Also, they're going to be handing over responsibility for control of odour, noise and dust to municipalities. I'm sure the members opposite know that the more downloading you do to municipalities, the more of a checkerboard-type effect you have in enforcement, because every municipality in Ontario has different abilities to follow through on certain initiatives. Some municipalities may have the tax dollars to have more inspectors and more staff people to follow through. Other municipalities that are severely hit by cutbacks by this government, by certainly lower assessment, are not going to be able to have this type of enforcement.

You're going to have a real lack of uniformity and it's going to vary from municipality to municipality in their ability to control things that to most people may seem to be innocuous — I don't want to use the term "innocuous," but seem to be minor in nature, like odour, noise or dust. But those of you who have been on local council, and I think to a certain extent as MPPs, know these occurrences in neighbourhoods can be most dreadful for the residents.

I know I've got a case in my own constituency of a restaurant, for instance, that doesn't have proper ventilation. Subsequently the whole neighbourhood is suffering from the odours that constantly permeate out of this restaurant. Will that municipality have the wherewithal to enforce proper ventilation regulations with all the cutbacks that are going to municipalities? As you download some of these responsibilities, I really wonder how many municipalities are going to have the ability and the wherewithal to enforce this type of regulation.

They are also, under Bill 57, handing over responsibility for the control — reducing requirements for companies to conduct audits and set goals for reducing packaging and other waste. As you know, I think in the last decade there has been some progress, some significant achievements in reducing packaging. You can remember back in the 1960s and 1970s you might end up with some small container that you required that was in a box the size of a room almost. There have been some gains made. Now with this bill it looks like that may be watered down because companies will not be setting goals to reduce packaging or even conducting an accounting of it.

Also, there's the possibility of removing requirements to obtain approval for scrapyards. Those of you who have dealt with scrapyards in your own constituencies will

know the impact that a scrapyard — I guess now they call them "recycling centres" or they've got some other sort of more topical name for them. But I just wonder what effect that's going to have on a site-by-site approval basis of scrapyards going into constituencies and cities and municipalities, whether they'll be able to control that with these changes.

Also what might be jeopardized, according to Mr Muldoon, is removing some permanent requirements for pesticide applications and possibly requiring less public notification. That's something that again is most serious as far as people living in close proximity to each other, in terms of spraying that is done to trees or spraying that is done to lawns or agricultural areas. I'm not sure if Bill 57 safeguards that type of protection for people who may suffer the consequences from spraying of pesticides.

Mr Muldoon, who I think is a very credible lawyer with the Canadian Environmental Law Association, does not support this initiative because he says it's part of a government that is relaxing environmental protection. He's most concerned. He refers to the fact that this is the same government that brought about Bill 26, for instance, which relaxed all kinds of environmental statutes and relaxed cleanup requirements, even relaxed cleanup requirements for mining. In fact, I was at the committee meeting when he came to speak to that. He was very concerned of what would happen as a result of Bill 26 relaxing those cleanup requirements for mining companies. I know the mining companies are happy, but I wonder what the long-term effects of those relaxations were with Bill 26.

1710

Mr Muldoon also is very concerned that this ministry perhaps is trying to cover up for the fact that it is a gutted ministry. It's a ministry that has been cut by 35%, up to 50% perhaps by next year, in staffing. Sure, some of those people who were cut out of the Ministry of the Environment perhaps weren't essential, but out of the 800 or 750 people who are gone, who have been eliminated, I'm sure some of them were very valuable in terms of ensuring environmental protection.

So you've got a ministry that's been ravaged by this government's cuts. How can this ministry now be in charge of protecting the environment with so few resources? Our own environment critic says this ministry will lose about \$200 million. So there's a bit of a contradiction here. How can these regulations be enforced? How can they be watched over when the watchdog has lost all its teeth? The Ministry of Environment is the people's watchdog to ensure that the environment is taken as a priority in this province, yet this ministry again has really been essentially dismantled in many areas. I don't know how you can keep a ministry intact to do a job that is very demanding when you cut \$200 million from its budget.

It has certainly not been a priority of this government. The environment has not been on the top of its agenda. We certainly know from what happened in Bill 20, for instance. If you put Bill 57 in context of Bill 20, you'll see that there is a very real and I think a tangible fear by the Ontario population that this government is taking a laissez-faire attitude towards the environment.

That is part of this government's attitude. It doesn't believe in government regulation, in government interference, and that's your philosophy. But I think when it comes to the environment, it's got to be a bit different. You cannot walk away from that responsibility of regulating and protecting, really is what it is, the province's health and the health of its citizens.

If our waterways and our air quality cannot be protected — and the private sector is not going to do that. In their benevolence, they have other priorities. Their priority, their job one, is the bottom line, and that's their prerogative. But you as a government, your priority, your ministry's job one should be pure and simple protection of this province's air, this province's land, this province's people and watercourses. That's not an easy task and you can't do it if you gut a ministry. You can't do it by putting down some vague, general pronouncements and relying on possibilities of enforcement.

If you look at what's happening in terms of the environment of this province, you'll see these are almost — I was going to call it *déjà vu*, or going back to a different era. If you see the horror that is taking place by many people — I know people have called me up about Temagami and what's happening there, the mining that's about to begin in Temagami, the cutting down of the old forests, the red pine, white pine. They really wonder what's going on in Temagami and they say, "Is that the right thing to do after 20 years, to allow the old-growth forests to be cut down?" Those are not people who are the eco-terrorists, they're not the radicals, they're ordinary citizens in Ontario who really are beginning to doubt and question what this government's long-range motive is in allowing things that are happening in Temagami to continue to happen.

You also hear and see this government's attitude towards the Niagara Escarpment. I know that the Niagara Escarpment has long been a real jewel in the crown of this province in its wonderful open spaces. I know that one of the long-term defenders of the escarpment is Michael Valpy from the *Globe and Mail*, and he is very, very frightened about what's happening. He mentions in the *Globe and Mail* on September 24 that this government is misreading the Ontario electorate, misreading the taxpayers of Ontario. Even though they may not jump up and down about environmental issues, deep down in their hearts the environment is just as important as the economy, and it's not to be underestimated.

He goes on to say:

"In their 15 months in office, the Ontario Conservatives have dismantled development controls in the Niagara region, proposed the exemption of the aggregate...industry from regulations on the fragile Niagara Escarpment, and wiped out 20 years of work on land use planning, and have embarked on one of the most aggressive programs of tearing down environmental regulations in Canada.

"More recently, they have let go more than one third of the staff of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and last week they jettisoned the chairwoman and four commissioners of the NEC without announcing plans to replace them."

I know some of you may say that Michael Valpy is an alarmist or an extremist or one of these eco-terrorists; I don't know what you're going to say about him. But I think he has a legitimate faith and belief in the future, in the protection of the fragile character of the escarpment. You cannot argue that. There are a lot of Ontarians who feel the same way about not only the escarpment but this whole province, that it is a very fragile province that cannot be taken for granted and you can't leave it up to chance.

Perhaps some of us should remind ourselves how important it is to have people who are extra-cautious about what we do to the environment. That's why with Bill 57 I don't see that change in this government's attitude, where they go back to the small-c conservative attitude of really conserving the open spaces and the fragile waterways of this province. This bill continues on the path of Bill 20, Bill 26 and the slash-and-burn regimen of this government towards the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

If you look at this government's attitude towards air quality, that's related obviously, because this summer you saw certain days where there were warnings in Metro Toronto to be careful if you have asthma or emphysema or any respiratory problems, that the air quality might be dangerous to your health, and this government is not taking a proactive role in dealing with that other critical part of the environment, the air quality.

If you look at what's happening in the GTA, on a daily basis now there's almost gridlock, there's sort of a meltdown that takes place because of the growing number of people using their automobiles to get around, because the government has made massive cuts to public transportation, so there aren't the buses out there, there aren't the facilities. You've got more people in cars, you've got more congestion, you've got more noxious, toxic emissions in the air.

This is what this government is really setting the stage for, air quality problems, water quality problems and a threat to our farm lands, if they continue on this road of looking at the environment as some kind of third-tier issue, a third-tier ministry. Sure there had to be cuts, but not so fast and so deep, and not so fast and so deep in the Ministry of Environment. I think that sent a very clear and concrete signal to all of us in Ontario that the environment was not one of the priorities of this government.

1720

If you talk to the rank-and-file people who work in the Ministry of Environment, they will tell you that ministry is in a state of paranoia. They don't feel that the cabinet, this government, has this ministry as one that is to be protected and that is to go out there and really do its job. Ask any backbenchers to talk to people who work in the ministry and if they feel the ministry can adequately protect our water, our land, our air. They can't, because there are massive layoffs and cutbacks that have basically left a ghost of a ministry.

Look at what has happened to intervenor funding. When I was at Metro the cost of finding out, first of all, the complications dealing with environmental issues was prohibitive. Ordinary citizens cannot afford to pay the

legal fees required to get up to speed on environmental issues. You need resources to have equal footing with the private sector in terms of having good public input on environmental issues, but this government abolished intervenor funding. Certainly that sends a very strong message to people that they can't get involved in changing and protecting some of the issues that perhaps come to their community.

In total, if you look at this bill and at what is happening across this province, in Temagami, in the Niagara Escarpment, what's happening to all the environmental advocacy groups, they don't have the resources. There is no funding for them to even be advocates for environmental issues. I think on a wing and a prayer the Canadian Environmental Law Association is still able to perhaps get involved, but there are not enough citizens' groups out there that can be a sober second thought for government.

It's very difficult, and I don't see that this government has done anything to give citizens' groups and taxpayers the ability to plead their case before this government. Corporate Ontario will have no problem in pleading their case. They will be on a 1-800 number, they'll be on the electronic registry, they'll be plugged in, but ordinary citizens in rural Ontario, in northern Ontario, in cities and towns will not have the resources to plead their case if there's an environmental issue in their community. They will not have the wherewithal to defend themselves and defend their interests in terms of the environment. Bill 57 does nothing in terms of further enhancing and protecting ordinary citizens and their right to protect what is a finite resource: our environment.

As I mentioned to the member for Northumberland, I know there has been a positive initiative in terms of trying to streamline, and I think you should be commended for that, but I don't agree with the blending of some of that initiative with this hell-bent-for-leather attitude that just because you get rid of regulation, it's a good thing; just because you anger environmental groups, it's a good thing. I think you should try to get the environmental groups on side, get olive branches out to them. As the member for Etobicoke West said, they're never happy; some of them are never happy. That's something that goes part and parcel with the political milieu we're in. In all areas of politics, in the economic area, you can't always satisfy everybody, but at least they are our conscience.

These people who have a strong belief in the protection of wilderness areas and our watercourses and wildlife, sometimes they may be extreme to us, but we need those people with that kind of commitment. They are not tolerable sometimes, because they are perhaps abrasive and overbearing, but their intentions are good for the most part. They want to make this a province that we can hand over to our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

If you look at what's happening in southern Ontario, if you look from Windsor to Cornwall, you'll see that there is an encroachment of paved driveways, of parking lots, of strip malls, of monster stores — these subdivisions covering over wonderful farm land in every nook and corner of Ontario. Sure, we need growth and devel-

opment, but there have got to be restraints. We've got to protect some of our agricultural lands, not for today, but let's look 100 or 200 years down the road when our great-grandchildren will say: "Why did you give up all that farm land in the Niagara area? Why is all that beautiful lake front gone? Why are there so many paved-over areas?"

That's what the ministry should be doing: Looking 100 years down the road. I shouldn't say "the road"; hopefully into the green fields of 100 years from now. What you should have maybe is a 100-year plan to see where you'll be at.

Again, I want to say that the environment may not be the number one topic on talk radio, but deep in the heart of most Ontarians they are proud of this beautiful green and arable province that they want to pass on to the next generation. Really, I think it's true. For those of us who have travelled, there's no place better than Ontario. We've got beautiful diversity in terms of our land, everything from mountain streams to our lakes and rivers and forests, our northland. We've got a beautiful province, a province that we are proud of, but let's make sure that at this crossroads, this turning point we're at, let's not go down that route that takes us to no return. In other words, once you've paved over areas, you've built cities on them and you've polluted the waterways, there's no coming back. I think we should learn from what happened in eastern Europe. We should learn about what not to do.

Let's look 100 years into the future and build an Ontario that is almost going back to our forefathers, the pioneers, and the way they found it. Maybe we can learn a lesson from our pioneers, who made this such a wonderful province.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Christopherson: I want to compliment the member for Oakwood on his very effective speech in defence of the environment and pointing out where Bill 57 does anything but protect the environment.

I want to pick up on one of the issues he mentioned in terms of environmental advocacy groups. He talked of their inability to play the vital role they have. In addition to the intervenor funding that was cut by this government, we also know that it has disbanded the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee, eliminated the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy and terminated the Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards. They've replaced those important watchdog, public, participating groups with their infamous 1-800 number. You don't need to bring all the community experts, you don't need to bring environmental and medical and legal experts together, and business experts — you don't need to bring them all together and talk about these problems and identify long-range goals that allow us to have sustainable development but still to preserve and enhance our environment — "No, no, we don't need to do all that. All we need is a 1-800 number."

1730

You expect that somehow people watching and studying this are going to believe that you really care what anybody thinks about the environment or about your

legislation beyond the cronies and pals you meet with quite regularly in the boardrooms and smoke-filled backrooms of the deal-making, because that's the only answer to all of this. You've obviously got to be addressing someone's agenda. It certainly isn't those who know and care about the environment and have a proven track record. I think you ought to listen to members like the member for Oakwood and my colleague from Riverdale.

Mr Galt: Compliments to the member for Oakwood for a compassionate speech, very concerned about the environment. However, I am rather disappointed that he would read from the popular press and quote from them. I would have preferred if he'd sat down and taken the time to read Bill 57 and the responsive regulatory review and the technical annex so that he would understand some of the things this government is putting through.

The popular press, as I read it recently, is not really concerned about reporting facts; it's more sensationalism. That's what you were referring to and claiming is in this bill. If you'd looked at the idea about noise, dust and odour, it's been suggested in the consultation paper by some people who came to us that maybe we should try a pilot project in a municipality. There's nothing in there saying that's what we're going to do. It's pen to paper as a suggestion of some things that have come to our attention. If you'd read that, you wouldn't have embarrassed yourself here in the House with those comments.

You were talking about the Temagami area and the cutting of trees having nothing to do with the Minister of Environment specifically, that's natural resources, but I bring to your attention that this is in an area where there was 40% unemployment, responsible cutting of trees, and I don't hear anybody up there complaining about what's going on in Temagami. You should notice or observe, and I'm sure the member concerned about labour would notice, that for every job created in the north, some seven others are created in the south with those raw materials. That's what makes Ontario what it is, working together where the resources are, using those raw materials to add value for the province. When it's handled in a responsible way, as this one will be, I don't know what your concern is all about.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I'm delighted to rise and applaud my colleague the member for Oakwood on his presentation.

In essence my colleague Mr Colle was saying that you cannot do more with less, especially when it comes to the environment. Unfortunately I have to disagree with the member for Northumberland that anyone who speaks in defending the environment embarrasses the House. My goodness, if we can't speak in this House defending the environment, if we don't do it, the government certainly doesn't seem to be doing it.

Let me say in essence what my colleague the member for Oakwood said: You cannot cut your staff support by 50% by next year and turn it over to municipalities to safeguard the environment. It just doesn't work that way. We told you that the cuts you're doing in some areas are quite appropriate, but there is one area that does not multiply by itself: the environment. I think my colleague from Oakwood has put on the floor in this House all the best possible scenarios to safeguard the environment.

I'm pleased to see a couple of ministers in the House today and I hope they are listening like the members of the opposition. I hope the government will give us the due public hearings so they will hear from the people in Ontario, so they can really say, "The environment is not an area where we can cut and still obtain more." If there is one area that doesn't multiply, where we can't do any more, it's the environment. When it's gone, it's gone, and it's affecting you and it's affecting everybody.

Ms Churley: I'd like to thank the member for Oakwood for his comments. I think he would find it interesting to hear from the parliamentary assistant that he shouldn't be quoting from the popular press. I think it's important that he quote from the popular press, because the press is doing more and more of a very good job of reporting what is happening in the environment and the deregulation that's going on.

They're very happy to quote from the so-called popular press when the press agrees with them. There was a minister on his feet today quoting from the popular press because he liked something it said. We should be environmentalists and communities should be very happy to see the press is finally picking up on the kinds of environmental deregulation that's going on and telling people about it.

I want to refer to the Temagami issue, which the member for Oakwood spoke about, and the fact that it's interesting the parliamentary assistant said, "That's natural resources, it's nothing to do with the Ministry of Environment." Cutting trees, old-growth forest, only 2% left of the species, is not the job of the Ministry of Environment? I think that says it all, and I'm glad the member for Oakwood raised the Temagami issue because it's one that I believe the Ministry of Environment needs to get involved in; it's a very important environmental issue.

There is 2% of these species left and there are people taking the Ministry of Natural Resources to court for breaking the law, for cutting down trees which are going to disappear as a species if something isn't done about it. Since the Ministry of Natural Resources refuses to take any action, it is up to the Minister of Environment to do something to save some of these trees.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Oakwood has two minutes to respond.

Mr Colle: I have to admit that I received this fax from my daughter yesterday, saying, "Why aren't you people raising a stink about what's happening in Temagami?" She says, "Why is the House so quiet about this critical issue?" My daughter, I think, represents a lot of young Ontarians who are again asking questions about this government's commitment to our natural forests and our natural environment, and I think that's what the debate is all about.

I want to thank the members for Hamilton Centre and Riverdale for their comments, and my colleague from Yorkview, and also the member for Northumberland, who perhaps may have a bit of a different perspective. But I really challenge him to perhaps go to Temagami — I've never been there; we'll go there together — to see if that's not part of really what our future's all about. That's the point I'm trying to make, that what we want to ensure

is what we do today with our bills and with our laws is that we're doing what's right for our great-grandchildren. None of us is perfect and I just hope we have the resolve to sometimes do the tough thing.

I know the member for Northumberland mentioned the popular press. Actually, the popular press reluctantly talks about the environment; it's not page 1 or 2 or 3. I think the popular press is more interested in other issues of the day; it is not on the front burner. But perhaps we can bring it to the front burner and literally get people reminded of how critical it is to think about the environment as our health and as our future; not in a way that's sanctimonious, but in a way that's practical and pragmatic and for the good of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity to provide some thoughts and comments on Bill 57. The first thing I want to do is to emphasize the importance to the public that this government be forced — because that's the only way it usually happens — to have public hearings on this bill. We've seen a government that tried to ram through the bully bill, omnibus Bill 26, and we know what happened here in the Legislature as we had to literally hijack the place to force the government to have some kind of public hearings. Even that was inadequate, but it was certainly more than the railroad job they were trying to pull.

1740

We know that the brand-new Ontario Labour Relations Act, the anti-worker Bill 7, was rammed through with no public hearings at all. The government likes to laugh. It's too bad the cameras can't show the laughing and joking because they think public hearings are a joke.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Christopherson: They do, and on Bill 49, the Employment Standards Act, we had to force this government —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Christopherson: Thank you, Speaker. Bill 49 is a bill that guts rights that workers have in the Employment Standards Act and this government had the audacity to say it was just housekeeping and that it didn't need any public hearings and they were going to ram that through with no hearings. We forced them. Our party, with the support of the Liberals, forced this government to hold public hearings and as a result, they pulled back major pieces of that legislation. They've offered up their own government amendments. When I asked them the question yesterday, "What would have happened if these amendments hadn't been made?" the evidence was that the bill would have created more confusion, in fact, confusion where it didn't lie before.

That's the sort of thing that happens when you ram through legislation and don't give the people an opportunity to be heard. So I caution the government and urge anyone listening or who's following these proceedings to urge their local member, particularly if it's a Tory, to fight for the fact that you as the public are entitled to public hearings on this bill because if even half of the criticism that's being heaped on this government is true,

then we owe it to the future generations to at least, if nothing else, take the time to look at this bill and give the people of Ontario, all of Ontario, an opportunity to be heard and to offer up their evidence.

Don't suggest to us somehow that a 1-800 number is the same as going into communities with the media there and affording everyone an opportunity, not just to make a submission, but to hear the submissions made by others. That's the point I want to begin with because hopefully, this isn't the end of the debate on Bill 57, it's merely a part of it and the public participation part has yet to come.

Secondly, I thought it passing strange that the member for Northumberland thought that the current minister was qualified — and I'm not suggesting he isn't, by any stretch — but this member thought the new environment minister was qualified to be the minister. Why? Because he's a lawyer and an engineer, and that was in response to me commenting on the credentials that my colleague the member for Riverdale has — and I won't repeat them again, they're in today's Hansard, I've said them already — but all of the credentials that she has. The answer to that from the government member for Northumberland was that the new minister obviously is the right person for the job because he's a lawyer and an engineer.

Now, that may come from the fact that it's someone, I'm told by his own colleagues, who insists on being called "Doctor." Maybe titles mean a heck of a lot more than experience and knowledge, or if you don't have a title, you don't count in his world, but I would suggest that's symbolic of a lot of the problems we have in terms of whom this government listens to, why they listen to them and why they refuse to listen to other people.

I want to comment on the name of this bill because there's quite a trend being developed with this government. This is Bill 57 and it's called An Act to improve the Efficiency of the Environmental Approvals Process and Certain Other Matters. The evidence that we've heard so far from expert environmentalists in the field is that this does anything but improve protection. Yet that's what this government talks about and basically — and I'm going to show other examples — they've got a pattern that every time — and I've used the term before. It's Orwellian doublespeak when they're taking something away, rather than first of all admitting it, or secondly, at least stating, "This is an act to" and then be very frank about it, they go way to the other extreme and say, "This is an act to improve...."

Bill 20, the predecessor environmental bill to this one, what's this called? This one, Bill 20, is one that's going to haunt this government. A lot of us said so at the time, and I'm convinced that at the end of the day Bill 20 will come back to haunt a lot of members, because this has to do with land-use planning.

Those of us who have sat on municipal and regional councils know that the issue of land-use planning, zoning, the whole idea of what you can do and where, is a critical component of how you determine what your community looks like. You've made major changes, and when people find out what is foisted upon them because the checks and balances aren't there any more and the

people in your neighbourhoods begin to say, "How did that happen, because somebody in the NDP told me there used to be a law that prevented that and you changed it and allowed it?" I predict these government members are going to have a heck of a time explaining how that made for better government, better community and a better Ontario.

What was Bill 20 called? "An Act to promote economic growth and protect the environment by streamlining the land use planning and development system" — they like "streamlining" too; it's like "efficiency" and "focusing" and a few other buzzwords that show up over and over again — "through amendments related to planning, development, municipal and heritage matters." Basically, what they did was they gutted the most effective parts of land-use protection and the checks and balances, that delicate balance between wanting to ensure there's job creation and economic growth, which we all want, but in a way that protects communities, that should promote the people aspect of communities and should protect the environment. Bill 20 did exactly the opposite, and it has that same word in there, "improve." I suggest to you that once again it's the opposite.

Is there any more? Oh, yeah. We did Bill 49. As I just commented recently, this is the one that we had to force them to go out in the public with, and they've pulled back some of the parts already. They were going to make that law in June. They had to pull back parts of this law. They had to make their own amendments to fix the mistakes that were in there, which is not unusual except that this government said: "It's only housekeeping. Don't worry about it. It doesn't matter. Let it go."

We forced them out into four weeks of public hearings and they got creamed out there, because Bill 49 takes away significant rights that workers have. If you don't have a contract and the benefit of a union, all you've got is the Employment Standards Act. What do they call this? "An Act to improve the Employment Standards Act." How insulting to anybody who knows anything about the Employment Standards Act and the protection of workers.

The Deputy Speaker: I think we're discussing a different bill and I would ask that the speaker get on with the business that is in front of us.

Mr Christopherson: Speaker, I'm pointing out as part of debate on Bill 57 that the title itself is misleading, and I'm proving that point by showing other evidence that supports the argument that I'm making about the name of Bill 57. So with great respect, sir, I suggest that my comments are very directly related to the arguments I want to make about Bill 57 and what it is not.

We saw with Bill 7 the same thing. This was the one that was rammed through with no public hearings: "An Act to restore balance and stability to labour relations and to promote economic prosperity and to make consequential changes to statutes concerning labour relations." What did this do? This legalized scabs in the province, took away rights that workers have had for 50 years that they didn't talk about in the campaign, and they had the audacity to put the title in there suggesting that it's some kind of benefit. I'm saying to you that's exactly the same thing they're doing with Bill 57 when they talk about it as "An Act to improve the Efficiency of the Environment

Approvals Process...." It's nothing of the sort. It's a further attack on the ability of this government — because that's the vehicle that people have to protect the environment, the government. This is gutting and hobbling the ability of that ministry to do the job on behalf of the people of Ontario.

The government says that it's cutting red tape, it's all about just cutting red tape. When we talk about the Ministry of Environment as it relates to Bill 57 and Bill 20 and the regulation cuts that you've made under the rubric of "We've got to get government off the backs of people," what is it they're really cutting when they say, "We're just cutting red tape"? Because if that's all it were, why would anybody argue the point? If you can cut down a process and make it simpler and cut red tape, who would be opposed to that? But what is it they're really cutting?

1750

Behind that little phrase is the fact that when they've cut red tape they've also cut and killed the successful green communities program — that's gone. They've terminated funding for the popular blue box program. That is one of the most effective, straightforward, pragmatic means we have of dealing with waste generated in our communities. This government cut the funding to that and has left municipalities to find money, although how they're going to do that I don't know since you've cut your transfer payments to them, or we're going to see the slow deterioration and eventual elimination of the blue box program. I'd like to know how that improves the environment or the economy or our communities.

They've slashed funding to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. They've eliminated funding to the municipal household hazardous waste programs. They killed CURB, the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. They've already begun to dismantle the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights, which shouldn't be surprising since they're also dismantling the rights that workers have under their bill of rights, which is called the Employment Standards Act. This is all consistent. They've killed the province's hazardous waste reduction strategy. They don't have one; they're just going to leave us out there floundering around and wait for some crisis.

They've cut by 70% the funding to the Ontario conservation authorities. In my community of Hamilton-Wentworth the conservation authority is a leading player in the issue of the environment. They're a very responsible, credible, active, important part of our community, and they're a part of this 70% cut. We have four Tory backbenchers in our region. Where are they on this issue? Why aren't they standing on their feet defending the people of Hamilton-Wentworth and saying that it's wrong to cut the funding to the conservation authority? Either that or stand on your hind feet and say that you don't want to defend the conservation authority because you don't think it's worth surviving — one of the two, but don't just sit there.

You've eliminated new funding for the municipal assistance program. It goes on and on.

As we talk about Bill 57 and its impact on the environment and on communities, my point in raising this is that, first of all, this government will say that cuts like this are

absolutely necessary no matter what — and I don't think people would agree with that if you told them, "It's either your environment or taking a few years longer to deal with the debt" — but more importantly, they'll point to the tax cut. They always talk about the tax cut. It's everything. It's the side benefit that people get for all the cuts they're doing. It's going to be the job creator because it's going to put all that money in people's pockets.

We said most of that money was going to go to the very well-to-do in this province. Anybody watching this program, ask yourself, how much more money have you got now in your pocket than you had before? Bear in mind the things I've mentioned here that have been cut. Are they worth the few bucks you've got? Are you able to buy what's been lost through what this government has cut? Are you able to provide a better future for your children with the \$5 or \$10 or \$20, if you're lucky to get that, in your paycheque? Are you able to provide these services? Can you protect the environment? Can you make sure that we've got clean water, that we've got sewage systems that work, that we keep green spaces, that we have areas where you can enjoy life?

In Hamilton over the summer, on August 15, there was a headline in the *Hamilton Spectator* that said, "Asthma Rate is Scary."

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): You should close down Stelco.

Mr Christopherson: Maybe the backbenchers might want to listen to this; it does involve kids and their health. "One in Five Bayfront Kids Suffer from Breathing Woes: Study." It's an article by Mark McNeil. It's the lead story in that day's paper:

"One in five children in a neighbourhood on the edge of Hamilton's Bayfront industrial area has asthma or other breathing problems — close to double the norm, a new study has found. The Hamilton-Wentworth health department study is being viewed by residents as proof that pollution is causing or worsening respiratory problems among children in the northeast part of the city."

Some of those kids are constituents of mine and some of them are kids represented by other members of this House. Where is your concern for that? What are you doing in Bill 57 or Bill 20 and everything you've done with the environment? Where have you taken one step that helps those kids?

Another headline: "Fine Dust in Air is Deadly." These articles appeared within 48 hours of each other.

"Twenty to 25 people die in Hamilton-Wentworth each year as a result of fine-particle air pollution, says the provincial environment ministry.... Dr Dennis Corr, chief of air quality assessment of the Ministry of Environment and Energy in Hamilton, made the local mortality calculation as part of research for an air quality study being conducted in the region.... Dr Corr said the calculation is 'very, very solid and based on many studies.'"

What did the *Hamilton Spectator* have to say about that as an editorial? I know that members here would probably recognize that the *Hamilton Spectator* is not necessarily known in the editorial room as a hotbed of socialism. They tend to be rather supportive of this government, much to the chagrin of many of us, but there

you are. That's the free press and that's their opinion, and they certainly are entitled to it. But what do they have to say? Because the government doesn't seem to think that what we have to say is credible, and they won't listen to other environmental experts, what do some of their supporters say? It says:

"A reduction in air pollution monitoring by the province calls into question the commitment of the government to protect its citizens from pollution in the environment."

"The provincial government appears to be on a dangerous course with major cuts to environmental spending that are cause for concern in heavily industrialized Hamilton. A 30% reduction in air pollution monitoring in the area, including the closure of the East Hamilton air monitoring station, could well prove to be false economy if it has an adverse affect on public health."

You will recall that it was my colleague from Riverdale who commented when the Minister of Health was here that this is a health issue, that environmental issues are health issues.

The editorial goes on to say:

"It is less than reassuring that the ministry is making cuts in budgets and staff that could well weaken its ability to keep tabs on the situation and take action to deal with it. Although the provincial debt must be brought down with responsible spending cuts, the government is at risk of going too far when the cutbacks begin to hurt in services that help to protect public health." There's ample evidence.

On Bill 57 itself, I want to bring forward also the Canadian Environmental Law Association point about the ability to exempt from the approvals process whoever they choose. But we don't know at this point, we don't know what that's going to be. The government won't say. That's where the 1-800 number comes in. They're asking the public to go ahead and comment on what they think those regulations ought to be. Come on, Speaker. It doesn't take an environmentalist or a rocket scientist, or anybody else of any great —

Ms Churley: Or an engineer.

Mr Christopherson: — or an engineer for that matter; thank you — to understand that the government's hiding its real agenda behind things like this. They've done this in other pieces of legislation, and I could quote those but I don't have the time as I'm quickly running out of time. But the fact of the matter is that Bill 57 has a group like the Canadian Environmental Law Association and other experts in the field extremely concerned that this is yet another piece of attacking the environment and taking away rights and abdicating responsibilities that this government has.

We know this is a government that believes the smaller the government the better. In fact, if they could eliminate government entirely they would. While that has some appeal, when mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers think about their kids and their grandchildren and say to themselves, "Was all this worth a few bucks in tax cuts?" I don't think they would agree. I think at the end of the day the people of Ontario will reject this Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole, hard right-wing ideology that just completely disregards the legitimate

role that government has in protecting the citizens of this province; not just the wealthy, because they can look after themselves, they don't need you folks, but the rest of the people who have to live in this province and work day to day are worried about the future. Those are the people, and it's the majority, who need a ministry like the Ministry of Environment, and not after you've cut \$200 million and fired over a third of the staff.

How can you say you're doing your job with the environment? How can any of you stand up and know that it's in the history books forever that you defended things like Bill 57? I say to you that you sold out. You

sold out to your Common Sense Revolution; you sold out to the interests of those who already have, and everybody else gets the back of your hand. This is just one more piece of that evidence. Unfortunately that evidence continues to grow. We will continue, no matter how much you heckle us, to stand here and expose you and your agenda and the damage it does to ordinary working middle-class families in this province every chance we get.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1801.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
87	3476	1	21	Detroit Hutzel Hospital, for example, is \$6,900 compared
88	3540	1	56	We did some checking, and at the Hutzel Hospital in

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First Session, 36th Parliament

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(Hansard)**

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Monday 30 September 1996

Lundi 30 septembre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Ed Doyle

Président
L'honorable Ed Doyle

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 September 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 septembre 1996

*The House met at 1331.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): Since the Tory government has refused to refer my private member's Bill 60 to one of its standing committees and allow the people of this province to speak on this piece of legislation, I have taken upon myself to travel eastern and northern Ontario to gather public input on the issue of labour mobility in the construction industry. I held six public hearings in as many cities in only four nights. It was an exhausting exercise, but certainly not in vain.

I have here a transcript of the comments of the people of Ontario and what should be done to put an end to the unfair situation that the Ontario construction industry is in at the present time. I want to present a copy to Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer in order for her to realize how important it is for her to stop the useless negotiations with the Quebec government and take action now in order to give Ontario construction workers and contractors the opportunity to earn a decent living.

FRONTIERS FOUNDATION

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Monsieur le Président, vous allez me permettre, bien sûr, de vous féliciter pour votre poste de Président de l'Assemblée législative.

On June 1, I wrote the Honourable Al Leach regarding the cancellation of funding for the Frontiers Foundation. His response, of course, and you've guessed it, cited deficit reduction as the reason for the cut. Consequently 38 families in northern Ontario, living in deplorable shelter, are counting on Frontiers volunteers for new or renovated homes this season. The budget announced \$10 million for a new program: the volunteer linkages initiative. It is intended, of course, to promote and encourage the spirit and commitment of volunteers in communities across Ontario.

The Frontiers Foundation epitomizes what community voluntarism is all about. Here we have nothing short of a proven package, an agency that works for people and with people, and yet the government has put \$10 million on hold. Why is that? For the sake of budget reduction; that's what they tell us.

Let me share with you a true story. This is what it's all about: This is before; this is after. As a result of their stalling, 38 heads of families, like this proud resident of Whitefish, will go back to living under these conditions. They have to carry the guilt. They can fix it.

ELI LILLY CANADA

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): Today I wish to congratulate the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company on the expansion of its Scarborough plant. On September 26 Eli Lilly Canada opened a new state-of-the-art research and development facility at its Danforth Avenue headquarters. This \$25-million investment makes Eli Lilly Canada one of the leading research concerns in North America.

When I moved to Scarborough as a boy in 1955, Eli Lilly had already been in the area for nearly 10 years. They've been an important pillar in my community for over half a century. Eli Lilly's first involvement in Canadian health care came in the early 1920s, when it collaborated with Dr Fred Banting and Dr Charles Best to produce the world's first insulin.

Eli Lilly continues to make miracles happen today with a sense of urgency true to their motto, "The patient is waiting." They're working on new medicines for heart disease, cancer, schizophrenia, AIDS-related illnesses and osteoporosis, to name just a few.

By choosing to invest \$25 million in Scarborough, Eli Lilly is saying yes to their community by offering 100 high-tech jobs for Canada's best and brightest scientists; they are saying yes to Scarborough by purchasing abandoned chop shops and crack houses in the area, revitalizing some urban problems; they are saying yes to those who are waiting for medicines and treatments that will change their lives for the better.

We must continue to nurture companies such as Eli Lilly. We too know the patient is waiting.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): With certain clarity the Attorney General stood before this House last session and firmly stated that his changes to the family support plan would "provide fast payment to those within the plan who are awaiting cheques." It is painfully obvious that his changes are not working. It is clear that when the minister spoke of "fast payments," he had no idea that his changes were going to have a disastrous effect on the system and that many single parents would be so callously affected.

It is also evident that when the minister spoke of improving efficiencies within the system, he was clearly unaware that reductions of staff in the family support plan would result in a severe disruption of the distribution of payments. When I reminded him that it didn't take a genius to figure out that service would severely deteriorate if he reduced the number of staff involved in the process, he laughed at me.

Sadly, the minister's mistakes and errors in judgement are no laughing matter. Those changes have resulted in

hardship for many single parents. Each day in my office I get several calls from single parents who don't have enough money to feed their children.

Have a heart, I say to the minister. Restore the funding to the family support plan.

1340

USER FEES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I would like to offer my congratulations to you on your election to that very responsible position and assure you that in your job you will hear from us in particular on this side of the House some stories that will be of interest and should be of some concern to you and to the government.

The member for Lake Nipigon from my caucus, who spoke before me, shared with you some of the pain and suffering that's going on out there, some of the diminishing of service that people are experiencing. I myself just this past summer was sitting on the sideline watching my son play soccer when, unsolicited, this woman came up to me and told me a story that made me question just exactly what this government is about and what it's doing.

She talked of her service as a person who delivers Meals on Wheels and visiting an elderly woman whom she couldn't find when she first went to the door, who on further search was in a bedroom crying because on that day she had gone to her pharmacy to look for her usual medication and was told she couldn't have the pills that she normally gets if she didn't have the money up front to pay for the dispensing fee which this government has imposed on all of the seniors across this province. She was told to be satisfied with eight pills, to go home, and when she had more money she could come back and get more.

This is an elderly woman, a woman who has paid her dues, a woman who has contributed to the wellbeing of all of us in this province, and she is afraid of what this government is going to do to her.

DURHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre): In April 1996 I made a statement in this House congratulating the Durham Board of Education on its nomination for the 1996 Carl Bertelsmann Prize. I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues the tremendous honour that has been presented to the Durham board and particularly to an institution which finds itself in the fine riding of Durham Centre and the town of Whitby, namely, Sinclair Secondary School.

This government has acknowledged the excellence of the Durham board since last April, not last week, like the opposition. The school and the Durham Board of Education were recipients of the 1996 Carl Bertelsmann Prize for excellence and innovation in educational programming. The board, which was the only North American nominee, was chosen from among seven public school authorities from around the world to receive the prize, which includes a cheque for approximately \$300,000.

The Carl Bertelsmann Foundation holds a symposium each year on a different topic, this year's being education.

There were eight criteria involved, and the Durham board was judged to be superior in all of these areas.

I was pleased to represent the government of Ontario at the symposium and also at the ceremony where this prestigious award was conferred, along with the professional educators of the Durham board, at no expense to Ontario taxpayers, I might add.

At the Legislature today are Mr Norm Green, who is the senior staff development coordinator, and Ms Laura Elliott, superintendent of schools. I know my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Durham board.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): As the Conservative government of Michael Harris begins to close hospitals across the province, the people of St Catharines and the Niagara region are becoming justifiably concerned that the Minister of Health will be setting his sights on one or more of the major health care institutions in our community. Witness Thunder Bay and Sudbury.

The St Catharines General Hospital, the Hotel Dieu Hospital and the Shaver Hospital have all served the people of St Catharines exceedingly well over the years and will be needed well into the future as an aging population seeks the services of these outstanding health care facilities.

No one in our community will recall Conservative candidates or leader Mike Harris promising to close hospitals in the Niagara region. Severe funding cuts, such as \$9 million at the General, and significant budget reductions at the Hotel Dieu and Shaver, however, do not bode well for our hospitals in the years ahead.

Faced with these drastic funding cuts imposed by the Conservative government and threatening comments from the Minister of Health, local health councils and restructuring commissions are looking at the unthinkable: the closing of local hospitals.

I call upon the Minister of Health to assure the people of St Catharines that the General, the Hotel Dieu and the Shaver hospitals will not be closed and that they will be funded adequately in the years ahead.

Canadians have always valued a high-quality health care system, accessible to all, and the closing of much-needed hospital facilities in Niagara will not contribute to the medical wellbeing of our residents.

CHILD CARE

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Earlier this month the current Minister of Community and Social Services received a report from the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services dealing with restructuring in the child care field. One of the problems with the passage of time here is that the former PA and the current minister are actually one and the same, so we have the situation where Ms Ecker is receiving a report from herself and has to decide whether to act upon her own recommendations.

This should give all of us pause for concern, particularly given the nature of the recommendations. Briefly, let me highlight a couple of them.

One recommendation is to eliminate the wage subsidies to child care workers. That's going to take \$4,500 on average per year out of the pockets of already poorly paid, predominantly female, workers who take care of our kids.

Another recommendation is to increase the ratio of children to early childhood educators in the classroom. Imagine having nine two-year-olds running around that you have to take care of, that you have to train, have to educate, and that you have to diaper on top of all of that. Quality is going to suffer.

The minister says this is going to give parents greater choice and greater equity. I don't see greater equity, particularly not for child care workers, and I don't see greater choice, particularly not in terms of quality care.

The minister doesn't have public plans to consult. We say she should be holding full-scale hearings, get some reports. Don't just listen to yourself, Minister.

MARTINGROVE EXPRESS PEE WEE BASEBALL TEAM

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): I'd like to rise in the House today to congratulate the players and coaches of the Martingrove Express Pee Wee Baseball team from Etobicoke, who won the Canadian National Pee Wee Baseball championship in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, on August 24.

This fine group of young athletes defeated a team from St Catharines to win the Ontario title. Once in PEI, they went undefeated in the round robin, defeating a team from Nova Scotia in the semi-finals, and then won their final gold medal game, defeating a squad from Abbotsford, British Columbia, in front of 3,500 fans.

The Martingrove Express Pee Wee team was the first Etobicoke team to advance to and win the national title. Their flawless play and sportsmanship was recognized not only by tournament officials but by their opponents as well, making them excellent ambassadors for Etobicoke.

My congratulations go out to all the players and their coaches, Peter D'Uva and John Donaldson, for an excellent winning season.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): At this time I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today Mr Grant Mitchell, the leader of the official opposition of the province of Alberta. Please join us in welcoming our guest.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I wish to inform the House that today is the first day of AIDS Awareness Week. One year ago I stood as Minister of Health in this House to acknowledge the importance of this week and the tragedy of AIDS. At that time I was

pleased to announce that Dr Anne Phillips and Mr David Kelley would serve as the new co-chairs of the Ontario Advisory Committee on AIDS/HIV.

Sadly, this AIDS Awareness Week I regret to inform members of David Kelley's passing in April. As anyone who knew him can attest, David was a uniquely genuine, humane and dedicated person. He is much missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

But while David's extraordinary contribution to the fight against AIDS is sorely missed, it is not forgotten by those who will carry on his work. I'm pleased that Andrew Lafontaine has agreed to serve as the new co-chair of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS. Andrew has a long history of work in AIDS at the federal level, at the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, and more recently in Toronto.

David Kelley's passing reminds us all that AIDS is still exacting a terrible toll on its citizens. It reminds us that we still need more prevention education. We still need to provide treatment, care and support for those already infected and affected. We still need more research, and we still need a cure. That is why AIDS is a priority for this government. That is why we have a five-part plan to combat HIV and AIDS.

1350

First, I am pleased to announce today a reinvestment of \$2 million to begin an HIV viral load testing program here in the province of Ontario, which will be fully operational by the new year. With a viral load testing program, Ontario will be on the leading edge of HIV therapy. We are one now of only two provinces to offer this breakthrough test which measures the amount of HIV in a person's blood. Results can be used to make appropriate decisions about anti-retroviral drug therapy. Evidence shows that lowering the viral load with anti-retroviral therapy decreases the risk of progression to serious HIV disease, AIDS or death. This will allow people with HIV to continue leading productive lives longer.

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS and the Viral Load Working Group, who have developed guidelines for the use of this test.

Second, between June 1995 and July 1996 this government has spent more than \$11 million to provide HIV and AIDS patients with important AIDS drugs. This is about a \$5-million increase in drug funding from the previous year.

Third, my ministry took steps to reduce the amount of paperwork that doctors had to complete to give people living with HIV and AIDS easier access to 3TC and Saquinavir, making these drugs available to physicians on the facilitated access list. 3TC and Saquinavir show a great deal of promise for people with HIV and have been helpful in keeping them healthier longer. The slashing of red tape and paperwork ensures that these drugs are more readily available to the people who need them most.

Fourth, this government has fully maintained funding levels for community-based AIDS programs. This allows communities to operate programs that meet their needs, such as counselling and education.

Lastly, I have asked the federal Minister of Health to extend the national AIDS strategy. In Ontario, we have

developed a funded infrastructure that allows us to respond to provincial issues in a timely fashion and we have a plan to the year 2000 that identifies priorities for action, but it's very important that we have a national strategy so that the response to AIDS does not become a patchwork depending on which province you happen to be living in. I have written to the Honourable David Dingwall, federal Minister of Health, asking that he clear up the doubts that exist regarding the program's future and provide details about the next phase of the national AIDS strategy.

Setting aside all partisan differences, I would encourage all members to voice their support for a national AIDS strategy. Our government, as I noted, has identified AIDS as a priority area, and our motto of putting patients first has been more than backed up by our actions. We have protected community-based funding in the AIDS bureau budget and we are reinvesting new dollars into treatment and care, including new drug therapies and, today, viral load testing.

With prevention education, we can try to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS. With research and medical advances, we can eradicate it. We all look forward to the day when I won't have to, as Minister of Health, rise in the House to remind everyone of how important it is to be diligent in fighting this deadly disease.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Before I begin I want to indicate to the House that the French translation of this statement has not been completed as I rise, but it will be here momentarily. If members have no objections I will proceed, and the French translation should be here within a few minutes.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Runciman: I rise today to inform the House about an important and innovative safety program initiated by the Ontario Provincial Police. Beginning tomorrow, every OPP officer in the greater Toronto region will be available for highway patrol on the 400 series highways during the morning and evening rush-hour.

This program has been named All Hands on Deck, and when I say every officer will be available, that's exactly what I mean. Regardless of rank, everyone, including the regional commander, will be called upon to patrol the rush-hour. The effect will be to put an extra 31 marked cruisers on the highways when we need them most. This will almost double the number of OPP vehicles patrolling our busiest highways at the busiest periods of the day.

This is exactly the kind of imaginative approach to policing we need. Getting senior officers out from behind their desks to patrol the highways at rush-hour is an excellent way to increase the front-line police presence where it is needed most.

All Hands on Deck is an extension of the very successful Highway Ranger program instituted last August as part of the government's comprehensive road-safety plan. Working in three teams, the Highway Rangers are out to target the bad drivers, the speeders, the tailgaters and the drunk drivers. So far, the Rangers have issued 40,000

cautions and another 15,000 tickets. They also found laptop computers taped to steering wheels and instances of music enthusiasts using drumsticks to tap on the steering wheel, just another case of hands-free driving.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to announce that the OPP's fourth Highway Ranger unit will hit the road tomorrow. A special 15-member team will begin nabbing bad drivers on Highways 401, 402 and 403 in the London area. In a month's time, a fifth team of Highway Rangers begins work in the eastern region.

The Highway Rangers are only one part of this government's comprehensive road safety plan announced last October. The plan is designed to boost road safety in three key areas: enforcement, truck safety and keeping drunk drivers off the road. You will certainly be aware of the recent efforts by my colleague the Minister of Transportation to pull bad trucks off the road, and the administrative licence suspension program, where motorists charged with impaired driving lose the right to drive on the spot, will be here in time for the holiday season.

These programs are a testament to the government's continuing commitment to public safety and effective front-line policing. Recent statistics show our road safety plan is working. The OPP recorded 13% fewer highway deaths for the first half of this year. That's proof our plan is making our roads safer for all Ontarians.

On Wednesday, I'll witness our efforts at first hand when I join OPP Commander Bill Currie in the cruiser for his first All Hands on Deck patrol during the morning rush-hour.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): First, I'd like to begin by acknowledging and expressing condolences on the passing of Mr David Kelley, truly an outstanding activist in the province. He will be missed. However, his contribution really made a difference in the fight against AIDS and HIV.

I would say to the minister in a non-partisan sense, as I have exhibited before in this House, that I share his desire to see a continuation of the national strategy. However, I would say to him that Ontario has always been a leader in the development of a strategy for Ontario and I would hope that he would not shirk his responsibilities while attempting to wait, because there are many unmet needs.

You mentioned today funding for anti-viral load testing, and that's one example of where I believe that you shirked your responsibility. British Columbia has had that program and testing in place for some time. It's about time Ontario showed the community that we maintain our commitment to those who are infected, who are living with AIDS and HIV, and we are sad to see the minister wait so long before he would make that announcement.

1400

I would also say there are many who do not have adequate access to drugs. We know there are many in need of psychosocial supports, and while the minister has said he has maintained funding for community-based education, and those programs are extremely important,

many are concerned about his \$1.3 billion in cuts to the hospitals and the effect that will have on the programs serving not only those who are dealing with AIDS and HIV but all those in the province who need access to care, which is in jeopardy because of the cuts this minister is allowing to happen in a haphazard, ad hoc way which we know is going to have a negative effect on our communities.

Similarly, there's nothing in here to assure those who deliver primary care to those suffering with HIV and AIDS and their families. We know the primary care reform model offers no incentive to family doctors who need those kinds of incentives so they can deliver care to those people in need.

This is an inadequate statement for the start of a very important recognition.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'd like to comment on the Solicitor General's announcement today and say that we certainly hope the program works. I find it mildly curious that first the Solicitor General has cut his budget, so our police organizations are working with fewer resources. Then I gather the minister said, "This is the number one priority, ahead of drug enforcement, ahead of serious crime, ahead of organized crime."

The commander, I gather, will climb in his vehicle at the height of rush-hour, get on the 401 and join the rest of the parking lot, where the commander will be tied up for several hours making his way along a few kilometres. That's probably useful, but we had thought the commander may have been focusing on several other issues as well.

We see in the budget the Solicitor General's budget cut — fewer resources — but I gather he's ordered police cars from around the province to come to this area. On Wednesday morning Commander Currie and the Solicitor General will move on to the 401 parking lot, and we'll see the commander spending three hours making his way along a few kilometres of the road. I gather that's the priority. Certainly safety is extremely important, and we hope it works, but it is an unusual use, perhaps, of the commander and all his senior officers, with cars from around Ontario pulled off the road, making their way along the road.

We had thought maybe the Solicitor General would be making an announcement. Certainly the Minister of Transportation has announced many times his great programs to fix the wheel problem, and the day after he announced it more wheels fall off. The wheels have been coming off the government since they got elected.

"All hands on deck Wednesday morning — Commander Currie." I'd love to be there, but of course I won't be invited for the photo op. The Solicitor General will wail off as he moves into that parking lot, and we dearly hope it works very well because certainly it is a priority for all of us.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I'd like to join with the minister and the Liberal critic, the member

for Oriole, and all members of the assembly in recognizing AIDS Awareness Week in Canada and in Ontario.

I also think it would be appropriate for all of us to pay tribute to the organizers of and participants in the many walkathons that took place across the province yesterday, where community support and understanding were shown with respect to this very tragic disease. Lots of money was raised as well, which obviously will go into services and supports in every corner of this province.

I agree with the minister that more needs to be done in this province in terms of prevention, more in terms of research and more in terms of support. I think the minister would agree that the support system and the health care system that are in place are still spotty in the province in terms of the strengths and where there are weaknesses of providing supports and health care supports for people living with AIDS.

I want to congratulate the minister for funding the viral load testing program. I can't comment in the same way that the critic has for the Liberal Party about whether it should have been sooner. All I can say is that it was appropriate that it was announced today and I congratulate the minister for doing it.

But I want to emphasize that I think the minister needs to show more leadership in terms of providing more support so that those who are living with AIDS can expect the same level of health care and community supports all across the province of Ontario, not just in urban areas and not just in Metropolitan Toronto. Even in Metropolitan Toronto more needs to be done.

I agree with the critic from the Liberal Party when she says that the minister has got to also understand that the kinds of cuts that he has announced to date, the \$1.3 billion in our health care system and our hospital system, all sorts of cuts in community and social services and services that do provide support for people living with AIDS, have to be recognized as well. Those cuts are hurting people, whether they're using our health care for other reasons or whether they're people who are living with AIDS.

Today's announcement in Sudbury is another one of those announcements that will have an impact on how accessible health care is for everyone in that particular community. It's fine to come here today and paint a rosy picture, but I think the minister has to understand that his cuts are hurting. A \$2-million announcement of reinvestment does not make up for the \$1.3 billion worth of cuts.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): In regard to the comments made today in the Legislature by the Solicitor General, I just have to say that I am beginning to see that the cuts that this provincial government has done towards the OPP are really having an effect and where the government in its own admission here today is saying that they're short-manned when it comes to being able to do the work in the province of Ontario that police officers need to do to keep our communities safe.

By you taking the police and putting them all out on the 400 series highways in the morning and in rush-hour traffic I wonder what's going to happen in our commun-

ities. I wonder what's going to happen in the neighbourhoods where we won't have police to be able to respond to what's happening in regard to crime in those communities when they're all out on the highway trying to nab speeders who could have been caught by photo-radar if you'd kept it in place in the first place.

I look at this and I wonder, what are we going to call these people? Are these people going to be the Runciman Rangers? It sounds to me almost that what you're trying to do here is you're trying to develop a highway patrol program with the existing police officers within the Ontario Provincial Police to go out and to try to nab people on the 400 series highways.

I say we need police within our communities. We need police in order to make our communities safe. I think that having all of the police officers out on the 400 series highways, although we need to be able to deal with that issue, could be done more effectively by other means such as photo-radar. I would ask the minister to go back and look at that rather than looking at that through his political eyeglasses as he normally does.

I just want to also comment quickly on the initiative in regard to pulling all the bad trucks off the road that the Minister of Transportation is going to be working on aggressively. I want to remind the minister that it was your federal cousins the Tories back under Brian Mulroney who deregulated the trucking industry in the first place. When that was done, federal New Democrats and provincial New Democrats said it would lead to highways being much more unsafe for commuters and for people on highways because trucks would become unsafe and that would lead to accidents and that would lead to loss of life, and that's exactly what's happened. I think by the minister moving forward in the way that he does admits in the first place that truck deregulation was a bad idea at the time, and it's proving out to be a worse one as we see the fatalities piling up.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME PROGRAM

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, today in the gallery we are joined by Matthew Dolmage. Matthew is here with his father Jim. I wanted to introduce you to Matthew. Matthew is 22 years old. He uses an electric wheelchair to move around and a computer and sign language to communicate. His hobbies include music, computers, game shows and television. He also has spina bifida. Despite that disability Matthew has been able to live at home with his parents because they have been supported by the special services at home program.

Minister, as you know, for some 13,000 families in the province of Ontario, the difference between being able to stay at home or being placed in an institution or a group home at great public expense is their access to the support of the special services at home program. Yet families who depend on that program are now facing across the province, on average, a 30% cut in their

funding support. In Matthew's case the cut was 50%. I suggest to you that where these children are concerned, where these young people are concerned, no cut in their support is acceptable.

In opposition, your Premier said that these special-needs families should be a priority. Matthew wants to know why you have imposed these cuts on them and on others who need special support at home. Can you tell him why, Minister?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I think parents who have a child at home whom they care for in this manner to keep them out of an institution are to be congratulated and are to be supported. That is one of the reasons why the special services at home program has not been cut. We've maintained the priority on it because we think it's extremely important to provide support for families such as the one that the honourable member has mentioned.

Mrs McLeod: I suggest that the minister try and convince Matthew and his family that their support has not been cut when in fact it's been cut by 50%. I suggest you talk to the 13,000 families across the province who are seeing similar kinds of cuts in their programs and the support they need. You might want to come and talk to the families who have been forced to put their children into foster care because without the support they need, they cannot manage the stress of caring for their children at home any longer. Minister, the reality is that these families are getting cuts in their programs and it is difficult for them to manage.

I also think it's important for you to know how strongly your Premier advocated on behalf of people like Matthew and the families who need special services at home support when he was in opposition. I take you back to December 7, 1994, right here in the Legislature, when Mike Harris asked the government of the day to double the budget of the very program that helps Matthew stay at home. Instead of that, the families are seeing large cuts in their support.

In the Common Sense Revolution, you promised that a Mike Harris government would not cut funding to people with disabilities. Your government has broken that promise. I ask you today, will you commit to doubling the funding of this program, as Mike Harris had demanded in opposition? If not, can you explain to Matthew why your government's actions now are so different from the words of your Premier when he was in opposition?

Hon Mrs Ecker: As the member knows, this program has not been cut because we think it is extremely important to provide a support for the families. Those families are assessed annually to determine the need they have, and that is what we try to do to make sure that we are meeting their needs. We are also maintaining other supports for those who have developmentally disabled children in the community because, again, we believe that's an important support.

It's a very difficult decision. No matter how much you try to do to stretch those dollars, there's never enough to meet the needs we have. That's why we're working so hard with those community agencies to try and restructure out there so that those supports are there and as much money as possible can go directly to those families.

I'd certainly be pleased to meet with the honourable member at the end of question period to talk about the specifics and have officials look into the specifics of this particular case, because of course there is an appeal mechanism for families who feel the decisions that have been made around their care are not appropriate.

Mrs McLeod: I say to the minister that the Dolmages are here today because they want to highlight the concern of the 13,000 families across this province who are receiving special services at home support and whose support has been cut. That is the reality for these families, Minister.

There is also a reality for families who are on a waiting list waiting for support because the dollars, as you yourself I think have just acknowledged, are simply not enough to meet the needs. It is not one particular case, Minister. The data are there, the information is there, the reality of cuts to families is there for you to see. What is needed is for this government to keep a commitment that you made in your Common Sense Revolution and that your Premier demanded the previous government to meet, and that was to increase the funding for the program.

When Mike Harris demanded the doubling of this program funding back in 1994, he did so because of a very tragic incident, and I don't want to re-raise the incident. I think you will recall the tragic event of Cathie Wilkieson and her disabled son. We don't want to wait until we face another tragedy for your government to act on what it understood to be a need two years ago. We certainly don't want to see more families forced to put their children into foster care.

Your cuts are having a devastating impact on these families, Minister, and I simply ask you again, will you do as your Premier demanded that the previous government do? Will you keep your promise to Matthew Dolmage, to his family? Will you double the funding for the special services at home program so that the cuts to these families can be reversed?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate the honourable member's concern, but I must stress again that the amount of money that is there to support special-needs children and for those who are caring for their children at home, we are maintaining that funding. We are trying to meet the needs of more families with that funding, because we agree that it's a very, very important support for those in the community. That's also why we are meeting and working very closely with the disabled community to try and make sure that we can restructure those services out there in the community so that there are more supports so that we can stretch those dollars further to meet the needs of more families. It's very difficult. We're working very hard to try and do it because I think those families deserve as much support as we can give them. That is our objective and our goal.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is directed to the Minister of Health. Minister, as you know, just a few hours ago, the big blue Tory bulldozer went through my community of Sudbury under the guise of the

Health Services Restructuring Commission. It ransacked the entire city; it ransacked the entire region; it ransacked every surrounding community, including all the communities of northeastern Ontario, leaving them without hospitals, leaving them without nurses and leaving them without health care.

Today, the people of Sudbury have been informed by the minister's hand-picked hospital restructuring commission that the Sudbury region, an area of population of approximately 165,000 as its base in the surrounding areas in all of northeastern Ontario, has lost two of its hospitals.

Last Thursday, Minister, I asked you if you would support a recommendation to close the Sudbury General Hospital and the Memorial Hospital. I ask you again, are you in support of your hand-picked commission's recommendation?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for his question on behalf of his community. All of the concerns that members of that community may have, the honourable member knows that the process is very clear. Those concerns are to be addressed to the Health Services Restructuring Commission. There is now a 30-day period for the community to express its concerns, to tell the commission what it got right and what it got wrong, and at the end of the day the Health Services Restructuring Commission will make decisions as to improving patient care in Sudbury and other cities around the province.

Mr Bartolucci: The people of Sudbury, the people of northeastern Ontario don't want a process answer. Don't worry about the process. The people of northeastern Ontario will respond to the process. I'm not worried about that. You again refuse to answer a commitment that you had made earlier to the health service providers when you said there would be two sites, nothing else would be recognized or acknowledged or supported.

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That aside, could you please tell me what you're going to say to the 365 full-time workers at Memorial Hospital, the 519 full-time workers at the Sudbury General Hospital, for a total of 915 full-time jobs? What about the 445 part-time workers at the Sudbury General Hospital and the 303 part-time workers at the Memorial Hospital, for a total of 748 jobs? You have robbed the Sudbury region of much of its economic base through the closing of these two hospitals. What do you say to these people who will be losing their jobs in 1997?

Hon Mr Wilson: Ontario is the last province to undergo hospital restructuring. We've had advice from political parties of other stripes who represent governments in other provinces. I can remember Mr Ramsey, the NDP health minister in BC, telling me last Christmas when he had the Shaughnessy Hospital, the first teaching hospital in Canada — where the doors of that hospital closed, but the services amalgamated with other hospitals down the street. The very first thing that one must put in place, we learn from the other provinces, is a human resources plan. I know the commission is aware of the importance of the human resources and the expertise in the hospital system in Sudbury and other places. Their first challenge is, in my opinion, to make sure that the training is available,

that they recommend to the government that the training programs be available, that at the end of the day the restructuring be done but also that we try and keep the expertise and the services in place.

At the end of the day, what the judgement will be is whether access and quality have increased and whether patients are better off as a result of restructuring. I know from the public statements the commission has made to date that this is what is driving the restructuring and this is what is foremost in their minds as they make their difficult decisions.

Mr Bartolucci: Let's be perfectly clear and let's make sure that all the members of the House know that during the campaign the Tory candidate in Sudbury, Richard Zanibbi, held a press conference at Memorial Hospital guaranteeing Memorial Hospital would not close. The minister guaranteed the Catholic community that the Sudbury General Hospital wouldn't close. Two broken Tory promises. The one commitment they're going to make is that they're going to wreak havoc on the health care community by withdrawing \$1.3 billion out of the hospital system so that people who are sick won't be able to get access to proper care.

Let's put it on a very simple level. Maybe you could answer the question: (1) How can you withdraw \$42 million from the global budget and expect that you're going to have better health care? (2) How can you invest \$3.5 million in repatriation beds, which will provide between 16 and 20, when everybody, every provider, has told you that 100 repatriated beds are necessary? Can you answer that two-part question?

Hon Mr Wilson: The first part is the \$1.3 billion. I can tell you that life would be a lot easier if his federal counterparts would give us back the \$2.1 billion they've taken from health and social services.

Second, I take the honourable members back to the jobs front. Our first investment, which is the largest single investment in the history of health care in Ontario, was \$170 million to create 4,400 new nursing jobs and homemaking jobs in communities. To date, we've spent about \$37 million of the \$170 million because we're simply waiting for customers in many communities, including Windsor, throughout the southwest. You've had a tremendous increase in the home care budget in Sudbury over the last few years, as has Thunder Bay. We have done what others failed to do, and that is to beef up community-based services to ensure that patients don't fall through the cracks as we get rid of the waste, the overlap and the duplication.

Finally, I'll say that every detail of the commission's announcement today has to be justified by the commission. I believe they're doing that. I would ask the honourable member to bring his concerns to their attention. They are the experts. They're provided with some of the best available data in the world today. They're backed up, to make sure quality isn't affected, by Dr David Naylor and the highly respected Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, their research team.

I am confident that at the end of the day, after the commission's had this 30 days and finds out what they did right and what they did wrong, it will have a recipe for better health care, where patients come first in our

health care system. That's the direction we're going in; that's the direction the commission is leading us in.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is of significant importance to my community and to northeastern Ontario. The minister is saying that he can provide fewer health care dollars, fewer beds, fewer staff, and still come out with a better system? I challenge him to prove it.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): That is not a point of order.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My questions are also for the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health has said many times that the savings from hospital cuts — he calls it hospital restructuring — will be reinvested in health care services, so I want to ask the minister again here today to confirm this. Will the money from hospital restructuring be reinvested 100% in community-based health services?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The commitment that the government made was not to let the health care budget fall below \$17.4 billion. We will fully live up to that commitment throughout the life of our government. Therefore, the budget will not fall below \$17.4 billion and the money from hospital restructuring that we see — this is all very theoretical right now — will go into the health care system.

I remind the honourable member that when up to 85% of health care budgets are salaries and wages, no matter what institution you look at across this province, any investment or reinvestment is a reinvestment in people, in health care providers, whether they be doctors, nurses or people who clean the hospitals. That's what health care is. Health care is not the bricks and mortar. Buildings don't cure people; people do. All of our reinvestments have been in people.

Mr Hampton: The minister seems to have changed his tune. He has said, "The government made it very clear when Mr Eves made the announcement last year that \$1.3 billion will come out of the hospital side of the ledger and be reinvested in community..." He's even said in this House, "Our first reinvestment of that money..." will actually be "\$170 million into new community services." So initially the minister's story was that money that comes out of hospital restructuring will go into community services like long-term care. He's been around the province pronouncing that over and over again. But a few weeks ago he said money out of hospitals would be used for doctors. Doctors are something different from community services. He knows very well the difference between community services and doctors' salaries. Which is it? How much of the money out of hospital closures will go to community services, which are meant to replace the services that are lost in the hospitals, and how much will go to paying doctors' salaries?

Hon Mr Wilson: That question would be laughable if it wasn't so sad coming from a leader of one of our three parties. Any investment in health care is an investment in people. The \$170 million in home care and home therapies and nursing creates 4,400 nursing jobs and other

jobs for home care providers. Any investment — the 19% decrease — and the millions of dollars we put in cardiac surgeries this year to give us one of the best waiting lists in the country, which is an ironic term — we're trying to get rid of waiting lists — is the fact that this \$10 million goes into doctors and the surgeries they perform and the nurses at their side. The Q-tips and swabs are a small part of the budget. It's the people who provide services.

I will not play this game of, "You get this and you get that." Any investment in health care — and we're fully reinvesting dollars back into health care — is an investment in people and an investment in providers. The tooth fairy does not provide community services. Doctors do. Nurses do. Home care workers do. They're real people. They will receive these reinvestment dollars.

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Mr Hampton: The minister might want to gloss over this, but he knows full well that when you close hospitals, it means you will have to have outpatient services; and because the hospital doesn't exist any more, it means that outpatient services, which used to be provided in the hospital, have to come from somewhere else. He knows that you have to have rehabilitation services because the hospital is not there. He knows, for example, that you have to have services for mothers; he knows that you have to have a whole list of community care services and home care services because the hospital is no longer there and the hospital used to provide those services. The minister said before that any money out of hospital structuring will go into community services. Now he says, "Some will go into community services and some will go to physicians," to pay for the mistakes he's made with respect to physicians.

Will you admit, while you're going across Ontario closing hospitals, that you will not provide the services that are being cut by way of new community services, that there's going to be a net loss of health care services to communities across this province?

Hon Mr Wilson: Throughout Canada, in areas where they've undergone the fundamental restructuring we're now undergoing, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that both access and quality increase when you're not spending money on a bus to shuttle people from three or four hospitals but you've got everybody in an excellent hospital site, and yes, a redeveloped site that will have increased outpatient services. That's why, as the commission goes through the province, it's making its recommendations as to the millions of dollars in new money, in capital that has to go into Sudbury, the \$48 million that went into Windsor, so that the facility that's left behind, the bricks and mortar, is state of the art, the very best, that the best people to provide those services are concentrated and are able to give their very best efforts forward without money being wasted in the system and services and tests being duplicated.

At the end of the day I agree with the honourable member that the test of restructuring is whether quality and access are maintained and indeed enhanced. When you get rid of the waste, the excessive administration — look at the Perley Hospital in Ottawa: \$35 per day, per patient in administration versus the average nursing home in this province, which is \$5 per patient, per day in

administration, oranges to oranges, exact comparisons — you can no longer support seven times the administration cost. It's immoral. Those dollars belong to the patients, and we're driving them down to patient services. We will not be deterred, because we're not supporting overhead administration waste and duplication. We're about putting the patients first, and that should be the job of all members of this House.

Mr Hampton: To sum it up, this is what it says: People are going to lose services in their hospitals, and this Minister of Health is not going to replace those services with community services. That's what it boils down to.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): New question

Mr Hampton: I want to read a short quote that comes from something called the Common Sense Revolution, something the government has suddenly dropped from its vocabulary, something it doesn't want to talk about any more, which says on page 7, "We will not cut health care spending." That's what they said.

Today the minister's hatchet commission was in Sudbury and his so-called Health Services Restructuring Commission announced that two of the three hospitals there are going to close. Sudbury General and Sudbury Memorial are going to close; \$42 million a year will be taken out from health care in Sudbury despite the minister's promises in the Common Sense Revolution. So I want to ask, will the Minister of Health commit to reinvesting the full \$42 million that you're cutting from Sudbury. Will you commit to reinvesting that full \$42 million into health care services in Sudbury?

Hon Mr Wilson: While we're in the business of quotes, I would like to quote:

"We could save millions of dollars by looking at some rationalization in terms of the administration of some of these hospitals...."

"If we think we have a problem in our health care system in Ontario today, and I do...if this government does not take the bull by the horns and start dealing with the problems in our health care system, the emergency and the crisis that we have today, in 1988, will look minimal compared to what we are going to have. The crisis is coming, the costs are escalating, and I beg the government to act before this system collapses."

I couldn't have said it better. That was the honourable Dave Cooke, MPP, in Hansard, May 12, 1988.

"I believe very strongly that in the rationalization of services the amalgamation of hospitals does make sense in certain circumstances." The honourable Dave Cooke, MPP, Hansard, October 21, 1986.

I can go on and quote Liberal health ministers. The difference is, we're taking politics out of the restructuring process. The previous government had its mind more to politics, more to pandering. We have said very clearly that we will not cut health care spending, and we have not. Secondly, we've said very clearly, and the people of Ontario have told us very clearly, that the status quo is not enough.

The Speaker: The question's been answered.

Hon Mr Wilson: The system needs to restructure, and that's what we're doing.

Mr Hampton: It was a simple question. It was a very simple question. You're taking \$42 million a year out of Sudbury's hospitals. Your hatchet commission even says that. They're taking \$42 million a year. My simple question to you is, are you going to reinvest that \$42 million a year in community services so that in fact the health care budget in Sudbury is not cut, so that in fact people in Sudbury will not have to do without health care services, will not have to fly to Toronto to get the services? Will you reinvest the \$42 million that your commission announced that you're cutting? Will you, yes or no?

Hon Mr Wilson: The \$42 million will be reinvested in Ontario's health care system. It is ridiculous to think you're going to put \$42 million worth of long-term-care services in Sudbury. There aren't enough customers in the entire region to use up that increase. They're not even able to use up many of the dollars we provided with \$170 million.

Let's take an example. Rather than have somebody stay in hospital to be counselled by a nurse for an hour at \$500 or \$400 a day for a hospital bed, community services say you'd take that \$400 or \$500 and you'd purchase three nurses who could go in for three full days right in people's homes, and they can check to see if the crib is actually safe for the baby, and help the mother with the breast-feeding, and talk about the number one cause of readmissions, which is jaundice. That can be done in the home. It doesn't need to be done in a \$400 or \$500 hospital bed.

Only five years ago, when you had knee surgery in this province, you were in hospital five to seven days. Today you're out on the same day as long as there are no complications. Only five to seven years ago, cardiac surgery, you were in for five to seven days. Today you're out the same day. So we don't need the hotel functions —

The Speaker: Wrap it up.

Hon Mr Wilson: — of many of the hospitals. Many of them lie half empty. The commission is consolidating those bricks and mortar. I agree with you —

The Speaker: Wrap it up.

Hon Mr Wilson: At the end of the day we will measure outcomes. We will measure whether patients are served and whether they have access to services. We want to increase access and increase patient services.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Let me cut through the rhetoric of the Minister of Health and remind him of two things. Firstly, under the restructuring plan that came forward under our government, which was a local community solution, our Minister of Health, Ruth Grier, made a specific commitment to my community, which was that 100% of the savings that came from restructuring would be reinvested in the Sudbury community. That's what we were prepared to do on behalf of the people in my community.

1440

Your restructuring commission this morning made it clear that only one third of the savings to come from restructuring are going to come back to Sudbury for the community-based services we need. That is unacceptable.

I want to ask you one more time: Are you going to commit today, yes or no, that 100% of the savings from restructuring are going to come back to my community for the community services we need?

Hon Mr Wilson: We will ensure that the community-based services are in place, but I say to the honourable member that I have never been able to find in writing anywhere Ruth Grier having said that, or any responsible health minister, because I know they would never make that commitment.

Do you want me to stop the air ambulance just as it gets over Sudbury's air space because the people of Sudbury didn't pay for that shared service? Do you want me to stop the people from Sudbury from going to the Hospital for Sick Children, one of the world's best children's hospitals, that we all pay for out of the general health care budget? Do you want me to stop the tremendous research and the measurements of quality that are done by the Institute For Clinical Evaluative Sciences —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Folks, it's getting a little noisy in here. I'm finding it difficult to hear. Ask your questions and allow them to be answered. Please, let's have some order.

Mr Hampton: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We've been asking a question that could be settled with a yes or no answer. We're not the ones who are going on and providing no answer.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. I can't give his answers for him. I just ask that we can be heard.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): We've heard the bad news about health care in Sudbury and northeastern Ontario today from my colleague, the disaster that's befallen them all. What I'd like to ask the Minister of Health about is the first stop for his restructuring commission, which was in Thunder Bay this past June. We went through the same shocked experience when it was announced in late June what the decisions were at that time.

What few people realize, though, is that the minister himself responded to the findings of the commission. The appeal process that he keeps talking about, he made his own personal submission. He also made it clear at that time in a media scrum that he would make his submission public, just like everyone else had, so the public could know what his position was on the restructuring process in Thunder Bay. But, Minister, you later refused to release your submission as promised.

The final verdict is coming down in Thunder Bay this coming Friday, October 4. The people in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario need and deserve to know what you have recommended for the health restructuring decision in Thunder Bay. We need to know. My question is this: Will you make your personal submission public today?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I was only informed of the commission's — I'm sorry, you're talking about Thunder Bay; I was thinking of Sudbury. I just got their announcement, the same as everybody else

did, today, so it will be a while before we have that response ready.

We're all learning in this process, is what I would say to the honourable member. This is the first time that we've decided to take the politics out of health care and to bring some fairness into the decision-making process. I know that the comments and data provided by the ministry are available under the freedom of information act and I think a number of people already have that document.

Mr Gravelle: Minister, that is absolutely astonishing. You try and separate yourself. You want to have the illusion of the commission being independent. You very publicly state you're going to make a submission in the appeal process to Thunder Bay; you make the submission; you publicly tell the media that you are going to release it; you then won't release it. Now you're just trying to act as if you're surprised by the question.

The effects of hospital restructuring are going to affect everybody in our region in northwestern Ontario for many, many years to come. You can't play with this. You're not just an ordinary citizen making a submission to the commission; you are the Minister of Health. You have an obligation to tell us what you said in that you said you would do that.

You made the submission; the people of Thunder Bay deserve to know it. If you won't release it to us publicly today, will you at least tell us here in the House what were the recommendations you made in terms of the restructuring process in Thunder Bay? Tell us today, right now. If it's available under freedom of information — and I've made that request, I must say — tell us today in the House what you've recommended.

Hon Mr Wilson: It's very clear that the ministry is a party to this process in terms of everyone else. In fact, some days I think I probably have less to say than you might imagine. You're freer than I am, because I don't want to unduly influence the process as minister. So you're freer than I am, probably, as a backbencher in the opposition, to go hammer away publicly at the commission for something you might not agree with. I have to take a more responsible position.

I can tell you that the report is a staff report, not the minister's report. I didn't sign it. It's a bunch of data on that — which I couldn't explain to you because you wouldn't give me 10 hours in question period; there's not enough time today — and that's available under the freedom of information.

The intention in the future — because this question has come up many times; we're learning in this process too — is to make public the reports that we send back to the commission. In the case of Thunder Bay, we didn't even think of doing it at the time. Now it's in the freedom of information process and I'll see if I can get you a copy of it.

Again, it's a staff report with data, and the commission takes that into account, as it does submissions from many, many other people and other experts who provide data, and, I must say, specifically the local data. The Ministry of Health data isn't always perfect, as you know, as to the number of doctors and services available in an area. So most important are the local submissions

they get that actually give them a very clear picture of what services are in place and what services need to be enhanced.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Last week I raised the matter of a young offender who was being held in an adult segregation unit at Vanier Centre. Minister, as I'm sure you're aware by now, this youth was housed with two adult inmates on either side of her cell while she was in segregation. In fact, they could communicate with one another.

After that question, Minister, you told the press that if the policy directive dealing with the isolation of youth wasn't followed, appropriate action would be taken. I'd like to ask you today, what steps have you taken to look into this matter, were your policy and directive violated and what appropriate action was taken?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): When the issue was raised, the ministry instituted an investigation to ensure if the matters raised by the honourable member did in fact occur, and, if indeed they did occur, if there was a violation of ministry policy. We're awaiting that report.

Ms Lankin: Minister, this was four days ago I raised this. This is with respect to a young offender. We had a young offender who was killed in one of our provincial institutions. You said after that that you'd taken steps to make sure that no young offender would ever be housed in an adult segregation unit.

I raised a serious allegation, one which I know you will find to be true, and you're sitting here today and telling us that you don't know the answer to this, that you didn't take the time to get the answer from your ministry to ensure that youth were being protected?

Minister, your own policy — and let me tell you, we can't get any cooperation from your ministry, from your ADM's office. We ask for copies of directives, copies of policies, and we're told to use the freedom of information to get them. We've had to get it through other sources.

Your own YOA operational policy and procedures of January 1996 says clearly, "Young persons in designated youth facilities and units are kept separate and apart from adult offenders." That's not what is happening, not in the case I raised with you last week, and there are other examples of that at this same institution.

Minister, I just don't understand. Do you not care? How is this not a contravention of your policy, your directives? When are you going to take control of your ministry?

Hon Mr Runciman: In fact, they are kept separate. They're kept in separate cells. We have a number of young offender facilities in the province that are in adult institutions. That's not a new situation. The member should be well aware of that. She worked in the corrections business herself for some time.

What we're talking about in terms of separation is they are separated from the adults in terms of the cell; they do not share cell space. That is the policy and it's the policy that was in place during the member's government.

1450

ONTARIO PRODUCE

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, if our economy is to expand and if our society is to thrive, then we must not only recognize the importance of agriculture; we must also invest in its growth and prosperity. These are some of the messages I've been hearing at farm meetings and up and down the back roads this summer.

Agriculture is a priority investment in my view, an investment in an industry that, as we know, generates more than \$50 billion a year in direct economic activity; only our auto industry is larger. I would point out, however, that although not everyone drives, everyone eats. Can the minister tell the Legislature what he is doing to further increase Ontario's agrifood exports and promote our agrifood products?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to thank my honourable colleague for that question. It is a good-news question.

The government, the Premier, the minister and the ministry are working very hard to increase our penetration into foreign markets, particularly the market in the Pacific Rim, which is an opening market, a market with tremendous potential. I must tell this House that a week ago today 20 top Japanese officials were hosted by the ministry and the private sector and indeed they were —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Yes, they were here to explore the business climate in Ontario. The Premier spoke with them and do you know, Mr Speaker, they liked the business climate in the province of Ontario and they are here to invest. They are here to import food products. Presently, we're exporting almost \$5 billion a year. We're aiming to double that shortly into the next century.

So to my honourable colleague, this is good news when we're talking about food producers, the farmers of Ontario. They are on the leading edge and this government is supporting them with \$15 million of new money, Grow Ontario money, a \$20-million rebate on the capital improvements that they will be doing to become more efficient and to produce more food for that export market that is out there. So this is good news. The food producers of Ontario are doing an excellent job.

Mr Barrett: My riding of Norfolk is one of the more diverse and agriculturally significant ridings in Ontario and is home to one of the largest tobacco farm economies in Canada. A number of farmers are also diversifying into ginseng, soybeans and other crops that grow well in the area. The export opportunities for these crops, as well as tobacco, has the potential for great expansion. You mentioned the Pacific Rim, exports to Japan. There are some excellent opportunities there for a wide variety of agrifood products. How is Ontario doing with respect to these kinds of exports?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: As we speak, we have a delegation with the Ontario tobacco board in the Pacific Rim looking and ferreting out new markets and I'm quite sure they will be successful. When I visited the Pacific Rim

with the federal minister and a number of my provincial colleagues last April, we were told that Ontario produces the best quality that we export, indeed they recognize our quality as being outstanding.

We have with us today, just as a matter of fact, John Andrews and Kim Cooper from the Ontario Soybean Growers' Marketing Board and we also have Mr Fujimori, president of the Takeya Miso Co of Japan. Welcome, sir. As you well know, you have been here on many occasions. Ontario has top-quality beans. We all know that the soybeans that we produce will bring —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Would you give us an answer, Minister?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Amazing, amazing. I hope you're not belittling our agricultural producers because soybeans are a very important crop in the province of Ontario and we export some of the best-quality soybeans that indeed are imported into Japan and elsewhere. We do have the ability to produce this top quality —

The Speaker: Wrap it up, please.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: — and we will continue to do so and export to the world.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. On the weekend an article appeared in a major metropolitan newspaper under the headline "Amateur Sports on 'Welfare': Tory MPP." It reads as follows:

"Amateur sports groups in Ontario are welfare recipients who have to be taken off the dole, says Conservative MPP Tony Clement.

"'It's like a welfare dependency, a business welfare dependency,' Clement told the Star."

Minister, do you agree with Mr Clement's characterization of amateur sports groups in Ontario as welfare recipients?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): What I said on the weekend was that there is a sports system in Ontario that does not have a strategy, and as far as I'm concerned a sports system that doesn't have a strategy is no system at all.

Mr Bradley: I was making reference to Mr Clement's remarks. It says here: "'I don't know what planet Mr Clement is on,' said Phyllis Berck, chair of Sport Ontario, a volunteer advocacy group. 'It's like they have this ideology and they're going to make the shoe fit no matter what the size.'"

Another interesting comment you would enjoy says, "Long-time Conservative MPP Morley Kells, a former lacrosse and hockey stand-out, ripped his fellow caucus member for the welfare analogy.

"'That shows Tony's lack of feeling. He's just a hatchet man for the Harris government,' added Kells, who doesn't have much faith in Mushinski's qualifications for the job, either. 'Mushinski's really only there to disassemble the...thing,'" and there is a little blank in front of "thing."

Minister, why don't you cease your attack on amateur sports groups in Ontario and begin to support those who

are trying to provide a healthy, constructive athletic activity for youngsters and others in this province?

Hon Ms Mushinski: I welcome the question from the member opposite. I think it's perhaps time for me, as minister responsible for sport and recreation in the province, to tell him what we have been doing.

First of all, we are absolutely committed to supporting sport at the provincial and community levels. Perhaps I should let the members opposite know what we have been doing over the last nine months. We have set up a task force that includes stakeholders —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The minister has a rather soft-spoken voice, and the noise I'm hearing from this side is a little louder. I wonder if we could listen to the answer, please.

Hon Ms Mushinski: Over the last nine months we have been looking, as I said earlier, at what the provincial interest in sports should be. Clearly for the last 10, 15 years there has been no strategic system for sport in Ontario, so we have been meeting over the last nine months to develop an approach that we think is appropriate for the taxpayers in this province. On Friday I think the members opposite will see that we have clearly set a strategic direction for the future of sport in this province.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I would like to return to the Minister of Correctional Services. You've told us you haven't yet found out the results of the investigation into the concern I raised on Thursday and that you haven't yet found out whether or not there was a policy violation and what appropriate action was taken.

Let me tell you about the investigation that's taking place and about the action that has been taken by the management at Vanier.

On the Friday evening night shift two management employees approached the correctional officer who was assigned to duty in the special-needs unit and asked a couple of questions, one of them being, "Have you spoken to anybody outside of ministry personnel with respect to young offenders and adult offenders being housed together in this special-needs segregation unit?" Interesting, the tenor and the tone of this investigation: "Let's get to the bottom of this awful occurrence. Let's find out who told."

Since then — let me continue with that night — she asked for those questions in writing and was refused that. She refused to provide an answer in writing without union representation and was escorted off the property and suspended from duty.

1500

Since that time, management has issued a letter to all the other employees who've worked in that unit demanding an answer to that question: Who did they tell? Let me make it very clear that this officer who is suspended is not the source of the information that I got.

Minister, will you take steps to ensure that all action against her is rescinded and that the request to all other employees with respect to this is withdrawn? Is this what

you call appropriate action to be taken in response to the issue that I raised here in the Legislature?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): This is essentially a personnel matter, and there are avenues available within the system, through the employee's union and other opportunities, to address these concerns.

Ms Lankin: This is amazing. You come here four days after I raise a very serious issue, say you haven't got the investigation results, you don't know the answer, you don't know if your policy was violated. Staff people are being intimidated and harassed, suspended, escorted off the premises because they are suspected of having told someone outside of the correctional ministry something with respect to this. They've got the wrong person whom they've suspended. And you're standing here and saying it's a personnel matter.

The evidence is very clear. After the James Lonnee tragic event, a youth housed in an adult segregation unit — not in the same cell as an adult, as you said earlier; in an adult segregation unit — you said that wouldn't happen again. You said your August directives would take care of that. Your policy, and I've read it out to you, is very clear.

Now, this youth was in that segregation unit and was able to communicate with the adult on either side of her. Let me also tell you that in Vanier, as we speak, this practice has not been changed as a result of your directives. Young offenders are at every meal time escorted over to the adult dining room, where they are served by adult inmates and adult inmates clean the tables up around them. They are in direct contact. How can you say that's not a violation of your policies and your directives? When are you going to get control of your ministry?

Hon Mr Runciman: I indicated earlier that we have these units in Ontario which have been in operation for some time where we have young offenders in adult institutions. In terms of segregation, indeed they are in segregation units but they are not in a cell with an adult; they are separated. That is a situation that is unchanged from the time this member was in government, and the Liberal government before that.

We are making changes to the corrections system that the previous government was unwilling to do, perhaps because of its friendships or relationships with senior union officials. I'm not sure what the reason was, but we are making very dramatic changes. We're doing what's right for the corrections system, and ultimately, at the end of the day, we hopefully will not have situations where indeed young offenders are even in the same areas or in the same institutions with adults. That's certainly our ultimate goal. It cannot be achieved overnight. It's a situation we inherited, but we are doing something about it.

I can give you another example of the Justice Hansen report. This member tries to indicate that all of a sudden they are the most concerned about dealing with young offenders. Justice Inger Hansen, in her report to the government, talked about training and urged the government to look into changing the ways they go about training correctional officers. That government did absolutely nothing about it. We have initiated a new

process for correctional officers in terms of training where indeed they will get specific training in terms of how to deal with young offenders.

RENT REVIEW

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, in August and September the standing committee on general government traversed the province and had hearings on the rent reform discussion package from your ministry. The members of the opposition and several tenants' groups fearmongered and tried to scare tenants into believing that rents would skyrocket as a result of that package.

I know your ministry has done some research into the impact that the proposed reforms might have on the rental market and tenants. I wonder if you could inform the House about that research.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I can tell the member that we did conduct an independent study. We had an independent consultant by the name of John Todd. The consultant's report is now final; it's been made public; it's been provided to the opposition. That research showed that rent controls in Ontario have depressed the supply of rental housing. Not only that, but the research also found that if rent controls were removed completely, average rents would largely be the same as they are today and the availability of low-rent units for low-income tenants would remain unchanged. Not only that, but the consultant also suggested that a system of partial decontrol, a system that we are proposing, would have a substantially smooth transition.

Mr Maves: Thank you, Minister. That answer and those results corroborate a lot of the evidence that we heard on the road.

I wonder if you have heard of any studies that members opposite would have put forward that showed that their doom-and-gloom scenarios would take place.

Hon Mr Leach: No, I'm not aware of any research that's been done by the opposition or any other parties that would substantiate the opposition's claims of skyrocketing rents, absolutely no evidence to prove that whatsoever. The research we have undertaken confirms that the current rent control regime has created a problem in the rental market where substantial reform is needed to improve conditions for both the landlords and the tenants. I believe this government has brought forward proposals that are fair and equitable and provide a balance.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): I notice the Minister of Labour is out of the room at the present time and I have a question for her.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The minister is present.

Mr Lalonde: My question to the minister, the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, concerns this government's failure over the past three months to negotiate an acceptable agreement with the Quebec government on construction labour mobility. After holding public hearings on this issue in six cities in eastern and northern Ontario, I can

tell you, Madam Minister, that the word on everybody's lips is "now." Enough is enough. People in the Ontario construction industry are fed up. They have lost enough money, enough jobs, while their Quebec counterparts have prospered. They want action from this government now: not tomorrow, not in six months, not next year. They want it now.

In view of your refusal of the last Quebec proposal that was presented to you last week, I ask you, Minister, what are you prepared to do now to give hope to thousands of Ontario construction workers and contractors?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): As you know, during the last two weeks we have endeavoured to arrange numerous meetings with our counterparts in Quebec. We are determined to resolve the situation. We are determined to secure access for our workers and for our contractors into the province of Quebec, just as they have free access into our province.

Yes, I did receive a response from the Quebec Minister of Labour last week. We are looking at those proposals, and within the next few days we will be looking at responding and indicating what measures we are prepared to take.

1510

The Speaker: The time for oral question period has expired.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Mr Speaker, at this time I'd like to raise a point of privilege under section 21 of the standing orders. My point involves the process by which MPPs in the Sudbury district were notified this morning of the report from the Health Services Restructuring Commission. I do not want to deal with the contents of the report itself; I want to deal with the process and how we were advised about this.

The essence of the point of privilege is this: Last week the Health Services Restructuring Commission sent the MPPs an agenda with respect to how it wanted to proceed this morning. We advised the restructuring commission that we did not find the agenda acceptable because it did not allow for the local MPPs to be briefed this morning and then to get a plane to come to Toronto to participate in question period. My colleague the member for Nickel Belt made a similar point to the Minister of Health himself on Thursday and requested that the schedule be changed so that we could participate fully in the briefing process, both seeing all the slides of all the work that has been done and having the opportunity to ask questions.

This morning, having received a response from neither the commission nor the Minister of Health —

The Speaker: I cannot account for any members. I cannot force members to meet with anybody or anybody to meet with members, so it is not a point of privilege. That's my ruling.

Interjection.

The Speaker: That's the ruling. I've ruled that it is not a point of privilege.

Ms Martel: Mr Speaker, you have to listen.

The Speaker: Is this a new point of privilege?

Ms Martel: No, Mr Speaker, it's the same point of privilege.

The Speaker: No. I've made my ruling.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): You haven't heard what she said.

The Speaker: Yes, I did hear. I heard enough. There is no point of privilege.

Mr Lalonde: My supplementary, Mr Speaker. It is clear from the minister's —

The Speaker: No, the time for question period is over and I said so. The clock ran out. We had 60 minutes; the 60 minutes has run out.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Under standing order section 34(a), I wish to advise of my dissatisfaction with the response the Minister of Health gave with regard to Sudbury health services restructuring and I request a late show. They're held Tuesdays and Thursdays; I would request a late show for Tuesday.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Your request will be met.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Quoting the same point of privilege, I sent a letter to Dr Duncan Sinclair on August 7 — Dr Sinclair is the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission — advising him of my wanting to facilitate a meeting with the three MPPs, regional politicians and the commission after the hospitals were briefed but before the media were briefed. He responded on August 20, stating that he appreciated my letter and, "We will be contacting you to discuss your suggestion prior to finalizing the process for the release of the commission's report." That never happened, and that's a part of the point of privilege the member for Sudbury East is trying to make. They did not follow a process they had committed to and I believe our rights as MPPs were violated.

The Speaker: Again, it's the same point of privilege and my response is the same.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: The point we're trying to raise has to do with access of members to information that very dramatically affects people who live in their ridings. The point of the matter is that this morning the member for Nickel Belt and I were specifically excluded from attending a media lockup with respect to the hospital commission's report and review. We went at 9:30 to be briefed. We were not allowed into the room and I find that to be unacceptable. As a consequence of that, we had to wait and at the time we were supposed to be briefed we had to leave and —

The Speaker: I'm sorry, you're belabouring an issue that I've already ruled on. This is not a point of privilege. I have ruled it is not a point of privilege.

Interjections.

The Speaker: This is not a point of privilege, please.

PETITIONS

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): If you'll bear with me, I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, a petition to end the spring bear hunt in the north.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring bear hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

I affix my signature to this petition as well.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I wish to present to the Legislative Assembly a petition from thousands of Toronto-Central Ontario Building and Construction Trades Council members who have grave concerns about this government's intent to dismantle WCB as we know it.

"To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system including:

"Reducing benefits, excluding claims for back injuries, carpal tunnel, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress and most occupational disease;

"Eliminating pension supplements;

"Handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury;

"Privatizing WCB to large insurance companies;

"Eliminating worker representation;

"Eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, known as WCAT;

"Deducting Canada pension plan disability benefits and union pensions dollar for dollar from WCB benefits;

"We demand compensation if we are injured, a safe workplace, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, WCAT be left intact, and that the WCB bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

As I agree with these petitioners, I add my name to theirs.

SALE OF AMMUNITION

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I am pleased to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario, the first of many petitions I have received on the issue of ammunition regulation in Ontario.

"Whereas the NDP government, under former Premier Bob Rae, passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition

Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain and use their equipment in the safest of conditions; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

I affix my signature to this petition.

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch Hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

1520

CHILD ABUSE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I present a petition to the Legislature of the province of Ontario, to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, the Minister of Education and Training, John Snobelen, and all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to inquire by independent public commission of inquiry into the treatment of reports or complaints of abuse of students by Kenneth Gino Deluca, a former teacher and now convicted child abuser, and the handling of such reports or complaints by the Sault Ste Marie and district Roman Catholic separate school board between the years 1972 and 1993.

"Whereas the protection of children, the promotion of the best interests of children and the wellbeing of children are a paramount objective to society as a whole; and

"Whereas the information which has been made public during the course of the trial of former teacher Kenneth Gino Deluca, convicted abuser of school children, has raised grave public concerns regarding the manner in which the school board, its officials and others involved in education and other public agencies responsible for the protection of children received and reacted to reports and complaints of abuse; and

"Whereas every person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children and has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered or may have suffered abuse has a legal obligation to report this suspicion to the children's aid society or appropriate authorities, who are required to investigate and take appropriate action;

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Education and Training and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to launch an inquiry into the manner in which reports or complaints of abuse of school children were received, recorded and addressed by the school board and all other authorities responsible for the protection of children and the promotion of the wellbeing of children in society, specifically by appointing a commission of inquiry pursuant to the Public Inquiries Act of Ontario."

This is signed by over 10,000 people, citizens of Sault Ste Marie, my constituents, and I sign my name to this petition and join them in calling for this inquiry.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I have a petition mainly from the village of Grand Valley in my riding of Dufferin-Peel. There's a total of 864 signatures. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Ontario government to review traffic safety conditions at the intersection of Highway 25 north and Highway 9, namely, the installation of a flashing warning light with a speed limit of 60 or 70 kilometres, or a regular three-way traffic light. Also obstructing the view to the east are signs and vehicles parked in a service station property. This intersection is one kilometre south of Grand Valley."

I have signed my signature to this petition.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas the current rate of unemployment in the construction industry in Ottawa-Carleton region is at a record level of 48%;

"Whereas Ontario-based construction workers and contractors encounter a great many regulations that effectively prohibit them from working in Quebec while construction workers and contractors based in Quebec encounter no such restrictions in Ontario;

"Whereas negotiations over the last number of years between various governments from Ontario and Quebec that were dedicated to eliminating barriers to labour mobility have failed to level the playing field for Ontario and Quebec workers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the proposed Construction Workforce from Quebec Act tabled by Jean-Marc Lalonde, member for Prescott and Russell, on June 4 of this year to protect Ontario workers and contractors in the construction industry be adopted."

I have signed this petition.

RENT REGULATION

RÉGLEMENTATION DES LOYERS

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) : J'ai une pétition faisant affaire avec le contrôle des loyers, signée par environ 400 personnes de London, Sudbury, Niagara Falls, Windsor et Ottawa. La pétition lit telle que :

"A petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"Save rent control.

"To Premier Mike Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the provincial Legislature:

"Whereas to abolish rent control in favour of a market system would be disastrous for tenants and give further power and allow unnecessary profit for landlords,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to support universal and mandatory rent controls which reflect a fair balance between the ability of tenants to pay and the necessary costs of supplying well-maintained and secure housing."

I have affixed my signature to that petition.

HIGHWAY SIGNS

Mr Bill Grimmer (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I have a petition forwarded to the member for Simcoe East and I'm presenting it today on his behalf. This petition concerns the request for an advance flashing light for left-hand turns on a street in Orillia. It's signed by approximately 180 constituents in the riding of Simcoe East, and I'm filing it today.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition from a number of people in St Catharines. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario promised not to cut one penny from health care; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has proceeded to cut over \$1 billion of much-needed dollars from the community hospitals; and

"Whereas the people of St Catharines have come to rely upon the caring professional service provided by health caregivers at the General Hospital, the Shaver Hospital and the Hotel Dieu Hospital and who view this betrayal by the Mike Harris government as an attack on quality health care services in the Niagara region; and

"Whereas the residents of St Catharines do not accept the notion that any of its hospitals should be closed, because they are essential in order to maintain a caring and humane society;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government keep their election promise and restore health care spending to the level at which they promised during the last election campaign so that all three St Catharines hospitals are able to continue to provide their much-needed and valuable services."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in full agreement with its contents.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I have a petition of 252 signatures from my riding of Dufferin-Peel. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

I have signed this petition.

TAX REDUCTION

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a petition signed by a number of Ontario residents which is addressed to the Legislature of Ontario, and I'm going to read it as follows:

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment in Ontario are dealt with effectively and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

I agree with the contents of this petition and with the signatories, and I will lend my name to it.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I have a petition of 93 signatures from my riding of Dufferin-Peel. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has passed Bill C-68, An Act respecting firearms and other weapons; and

"Whereas we welcome real gun control and support those portions of Bill C-68 which provide tougher penalties for the criminal use of firearms, new offences

related to firearms smuggling and trafficking and the ban on paramilitary weapons; and

"Whereas existing laws requiring the registration of handguns have done little to reduce the number of crimes committed with handguns or lower the volume of handguns smuggled into Canada; and

"Whereas the national gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will result in a massive misallocation of the limited resources available to law enforcement agencies, with no practical effect on the traffic of illegal firearms or the use of guns by violent criminals; and

"Whereas the gun registration provisions of Bill C-68 will take police officers off the streets and involve them in bureaucracy other than fighting crime and will make the task of real gun control more difficult and dangerous for police officers;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to repeal from Bill C-68 those provisions for a compulsory registration of all firearms."

I support this petition and have so signed it.

1530

USER FEES

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): "Whereas the government of Mike Harris has broken its pre-election promise not to impose user fees on health care;

"Whereas the user fee imposed by the Harris government on prescription drugs is causing low-income seniors grave hardship;

"Whereas the vast majority of seniors have worked very hard and have paid taxes for decades;

"Whereas seniors are most concerned that this will be the beginning of more and more user fees on health care;

"We, the undersigned, totally oppose the Mike Harris prescription user fee for seniors and petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Mike Harris government place a moratorium on all health care user fees for seniors."

I affix my name to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU PROCESSUS D'AUTORISATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 57, An Act to improve the Efficiency of the Environmental Approvals Process and Certain Other Matters / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à améliorer l'efficacité du processus d'autorisation environnementale et concernant certaines autres questions.

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): I am delighted to have the opportunity today to speak in support of Bill 57. Before I do, however, I'd just like to say how good it is to be back in the House. This past summer was an opportunity for me, as I'm sure it was for

many other members, to spend a considerable amount of my time in my riding high atop Hamilton Mountain, speaking with constituents in my office at Canada Day festivities and other events, to get their feedback on how they feel this government has been doing.

The overwhelming message I received from people is that whatever questions they may have about some of the issues this government is dealing with, they firmly believe we are on the right track. They are also very pleased that, unlike the two previous Liberal and NDP governments, we are doing exactly what we said we would do.

One of the things we said we would do is reduce red tape and help remove barriers to economic growth and investment. The problem of red tape was highlighted just last week in a report by the Fraser Institute, which looked at the extraordinarily high cost of regulation. This report estimated that regulatory compliance at all levels of government cost Canadians \$85.7 billion — that's \$85.7 billion — in 1993-94. Surely no one would say we don't need regulation. Of course we need regulation to protect our health and safety and our environment. But \$85.7 billion is clearly a case of over-regulation and clearly a case of overkill. It is an astronomical cost that acts as a huge disincentive to investment, job creation and economic growth. We need economic investment in this province, we need further job creation in this province and we need economic growth in this province.

Another thing we said we would do is make government more administratively efficient and use taxpayers' money more wisely. Bill 57, which reforms the environmental approvals process among other things, is a very important initiative because it is in keeping with these promises. It is in line with this government's efforts to reduce the regulatory burden and to help remove barriers to economic growth and investment, and it makes wise use of government resources so that they are spent on real environmental problems. However, just as importantly, Bill 57 will accomplish these goals without — and I emphasize "without" — reducing environmental protection or lowering environmental standards.

The opposition will spend all their time this afternoon, as they did last Thursday afternoon, telling us how this bill will hurt the environment or how this is another example of how this government is gutting the environment. Nothing could be further from the truth of the matter. There is nothing in Bill 57 which affects environmental standards or which affects the Ministry of Environment's fundamental role in setting these standards and in seeing that these standards are met. Our environmental standards are tough and they will remain tough. We will as a government continue to enforce these tough standards.

But what's this bill really about? This bill is about reforming the current inefficient and costly approvals process that creates unnecessary red tape for business, industry and municipalities.

Let's be very clear about what Bill 57 is changing here. It is introducing an approved and more straightforward approvals process for certain activities with a predictable environmental impact. The minister used the example of restaurants and kitchen exhausts last week,

and I believe that was a good example because it illustrates exactly what this Bill 57 is trying to remedy. If you think about the number of restaurants that set up shop in this province and the well-known environmental impact of kitchen exhaust, it seems to me that it doesn't make much sense for this government to go to each and every fish and chips shop at every corner and hold their hands while they set up their kitchen vents. Surely this government has many more important environmental concerns to deal with than this. Surely our resources should be focused where the environmental need is the greatest. Surely we have more important environmental battles to fight.

For those persons concerned with the question of what activities will be included in the new standardized approvals process, the minister has made it clear that there will be full consultation before this is done. The ministry will listen to all stakeholders before defining the environmental activities which are to be included in the new standardized approvals process.

I don't really see what is wrong with the objectives of this bill. What's wrong with making regulations more efficient and less costly? Surely we want regulations that are clear, precise, effective, administratively efficient and not costly to administer. Surely no one can disagree with that objective.

Bill 57 will also save taxpayers' money by winding down the Environmental Compensation Corp. While costing taxpayers almost \$3 million to run over the past decade, the ECC has only paid out about \$690,000. Once again, this does not appear to me to be a very wise use of taxpayers' dollars, but that's not surprising. The previous Liberal and NDP governments were not exactly in the habit of using taxpayers' money wisely. Again I wonder, and I've wondered before, if they're as liberal with their own money as they are with the taxpayers' money.

I know there has been significant concern over how compensation will be paid out. Under the current law, companies are liable for any spills they are involved in. Bill 57 does not change that. Companies are still liable for any spills, and compensation will be available through the courts system.

Bill 57 also introduces user fees, as the minister described last week in the House. This also was a long time coming.

It doesn't make sense for this government to spend \$1 million a year subsidizing the waste and generator industries. They don't need it and Ontario taxpayers don't need it.

I believe the minister said two things in his speech to the House last week which bear repeating. The minister said that we must focus on results instead of process. Process is important, but only when it is connected to results. We can have the most elaborate processes for environmental protection while at the same time achieving less than adequate results. Our goal should be to have processes for environmental protection that directly tie into results. That only makes sense.

The minister also mentioned the word "balance." I think that some people, perhaps a few of the members across the way, think "balance" is a bad word. As a member of this House, I believe that balance is a positive

word and that legislation passed in this House should be characterized by balance. I also believe that Bill 57 is a balanced bill that will get rid of those unnecessary regulatory processes that have little to do with serious environmental protection and everything to do with inefficiency and costliness.

In closing, I believe we can achieve a balance between effective environmental protection and a growing, healthy economy. I believe that Bill 57 is a step in achieving this balance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Questions or comments?

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): In response to the member for Hamilton Mountain, I can appreciate his comments. However, I would like to point out a couple of very important areas where this particular bill, the way it is, will not accomplish what it's proposed to do, and that is to create a balance, or a fair balance.

It does not create a fair balance when you are going to chop down the resources. You're chopping down the people who are supposed to be doing the work that the ministry is supposed to be doing. You're passing this along to the local municipalities, and of course, local municipalities don't have those resources. So really, how are they going to do that? With all due respect to the member who says job creation, this is taking jobs away. It is not creating more jobs. How are you going to create more jobs? Even though you're saving \$5.7 million, there is no excuse to save \$5.7 million at the expense of the environment. Once you dispose of those things that have been put in place to safeguard and protect the environment, the \$5.7 million, with all due respect, is really a drop in the bucket.

1540

When we're speaking of process and result according to the process, we are not saying that things shouldn't be improving and cut some of the red tape, but not at the expense of the environment. So I can appreciate what the member is saying. I hope that this, as he said, will go for public consultation, for public input, and then come back. I do hope that the Premier, the minister, the members on the government side will seriously take into consideration the views of the people out there, who I'm sure, when given the opportunity, will be speaking truly against the majority of this proposed bill.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): To the member opposite and his speech on this particular bill, Bill 57, it amazes me somewhat to watch government members enter this House with their prewritten speeches on the part of the spin masters of the Premier's office and the cabinet office, because time after time when legislation comes in, I've rarely seen an occasion where members of this House have stood in this House from the government benches and actually spoke on a bill from the perspective of their constituents, the people they're here to represent. What I heard — except for Mr Arnott, I do stand corrected, and Morley Kells is another, but en masse, most of those backbenchers are trying to run as quickly as they can to the front benches or to be pulled into the cabinet and they figure the rule to do that is to read the spin that you're being given by these people. That's not what

you're here for. I don't mean to preach, but you are here to represent your constituents.

I know for a fact that the member opposite who just gave this speech has had constituents come to him, because they've also talked to me, about their concerns about what this particular bill has to do. In sake of that argument, you talked about the environmental —

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: I have my own member heckling me here. The member talks about the Environmental Compensation Corp as being dissolved and you talk about how they only paid out some \$600 million but they spent \$3 million over the period of time that that corporation was in place. You fail to recognize the people who were affected and the people quite frankly who could have never got their day in court if it had not been for that particular fund.

The member comes in here, gives a speech written by the cabinet office and doesn't take into account what this means to his constituents. What it means clearly is this: If one of your constituents ends up in a situation where there is a gas spill and your constituent has to go to court, if he or she doesn't have the bucks, there's not a prayer that they're going to be able to get their fair day in court because that particular fund will not give them the money that they need to be able to hire lawyers. Most people don't have the opportunity to do that.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): First, I'd like to compliment the member for Hamilton Mountain on just an excellent speech, an excellent presentation on this bill. I'm frankly disappointed in the member for Cochrane South making reference to using a properly prepared speech. I'd compliment him on staying on topic. This is something that the opposition's had a lot of difficulty with in their presentations. We heard a 90-minute speech yesterday from the NDP critic and it was only about five minutes on Bill 57. The rest of the 85 minutes was on anything and everything except having to do with Bill 57. That's quite disappointing. I have stood in this place asking them to come back to the topic and certainly I compliment you for doing the same — bringing them back on topic to things such as Bill 57.

The other thing I was disappointed in hearing last Thursday was they were making reference to the 800 number, which I commented in my presentation. I'm rather surprised that members of the NDP wouldn't have understood that 1-800-667-9979 happened to be the number that they brought in with their Environmental Bill of Rights registry. They didn't even recognize the number and they were making fun of it, the number that they brought in.

I just might comment. There are many ways of getting into the Environmental Bill of Rights. You can go in by modem, by Internet or the World Wide Web and get information about what's going on, what we're putting in there on bills such as Bill 57 and also on the regulatory reform that we're actively involved with.

I have instructions for accessing the environmental registry. If you'd care, I can send it over to you, if you're interested, other than just making fun of the 800 number. It would be quite beneficial if you really wanted to look

in and find out about Bill 57 so you can be on topic in the future.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Hamilton Mountain, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr Pettit: I appreciate the chance to respond. I think that the member for Northumberland said everything there was that needed to be said to the member for Cochrane South. I was hoping that the member for Hamilton Centre and the member for Riverdale would be here today because I wanted to assure them that despite everything they'd say, I want them to know that I for one have listened intently to each of their speeches on Bill 57 and I want them to know that I deeply respect their thoughts on this bill and the other bills that they've spoken to, because I know that both of them are deeply committed to their cause and that they speak from their heart.

Unfortunately, sometimes speech from the heart is overwhelmed by empty rhetoric and unsubstantiated baffle-gab and I believe that this is the case here. There is nothing in Bill 57 that will reduce environmental protection or lower environmental standards, despite the fearmongering and the non-fact-based arguments of the opposition.

Not only have I listened to their speeches here in the House, but I was also present to hear the member for Riverdale speak on many occasions during the summer during our committee travel throughout the province. Then, as now, the main thrust of their arguments is that there's nothing wrong with the status quo, everything's okay, no changes needed. Everything they did while they were in government was perfect; there's no need to revamp anything.

Isn't that convenient? What's missing here are any viable alternatives or any form of reasonable constructive criticism. Instead, all we hear is constant fearmongering and slamming everything the government has done or is doing.

I say to the members opposite, the status quo is not acceptable to me. It's not acceptable to the majority of Ontarians who gave us a mandate to make change, to become more cost-efficient and to reduce the role government plays in all of our lives. So it seems that this message still hasn't sunk in across the floor as yet and I hope it will soon. Be a part of the solution.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Sergio: I rise to participate in the discussion on Bill 57 and I want to take a few minutes. I won't be too, too long, because I will be repeating some of the concerns that have been expressed from members on this side of the House, and that is serious concern with the content of the bill.

Let me say first that in many, many ways Bill 57 is very similar to the intent, if not the content, of Bill 52. While Bill 57 portrays to improve the efficiency of the environmental approvals process and other matters, Bill 52 is also an act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining process.

We have just heard from one of the last speakers in there to have the opposition come up with something serious, concrete and not perhaps to badger the govern-

ment side. As the speaker was himself saying, that they are doing exactly what they told the people of Ontario they would be doing, I have to say to them, look at your own documentation and then you tell this House, you tell the people of Ontario if you are doing what you told them you were going to do.

I have to say, with all due respect, that in every documentation that the government has put forward so far, there is absolutely nothing which addresses either in terms of one or two lines with respect to the protection of the environment. There is nothing in the so-called Common Sense Revolution. There was absolutely nothing in the speech from the throne. There is absolutely nothing in the Ontario budget, which came down on May 7, 1996. I wonder where we get this protection of our environment. The only thing we get is diluting whatever protection we have with respect to the environmental laws so far.

1550

I have to tell the government, because it will be making the final decision, that you can't have more resources with fewer resources. It comes down to that; nothing more, nothing less. What the government is doing with these two particular bills, 52 and 57, is exactly that. They are depleting whatever resources we have to safeguard the environment as we know it today. They are chopping millions of dollars, they are chopping staff all over the place and they are passing the buck to the municipalities and saying, "You do it for us." We know that with something as sensitive as the environment this is not something you can rely upon the municipalities for, not because they are incapable, but because they don't have the financial resources and the manpower to deal with all the many variety of issues and facets the environment imposes upon us. What's happening then? What we see is a government that is truly giving away its responsibility in an area where it should be doing more. They should be getting more involved.

I was fortunate enough to spend two days at a hearing on one of these two bills. This comes from the regional government in Niagara; this is what they were saying at that particular hearing. This bill was brought about primarily in response to the restructuring and significant downsizing of the Ministry of Natural Resources non-renewable resources program; not more, not less. They are restructuring, they are downsizing, they are cutting down at the expense of the environment. It continues, "The ministry appears to be abandoning its public role and placing it in the hands of the private sector." There it is — how can we forget? — putting it in the hands of the private sector. Isn't it nice that with something as valuable as the environment, the government says, in order to downsize, to cut millions here and there to give to whoever they may be down the road, probably the big ones on Bay Street, "Let's privatize it and let's leave the environmental issues and protection to the private sector"?

Is it possible that we've become so — how should I say it without offending the government side? — irresponsible that even on such a matter that affects every one in the province — and even out of the province because the effects of what we do in Ontario may be felt

beyond our borders — we are saying that to do some restructuring for the benefit of the government side we are going to leave this in the hands of the private sector? The government will no longer be involved in the review of site-specific applications, monitoring for compliance and doing annual inspections. It will no longer collect various fees such as licence and rehabilitation security deposits. The new focus, the ministry tells us, will be on policy development, the setting and enforcement of standards and licence conditions, and the approval of licences and permits. Their effectiveness in this area we suspect will depend on the number of provincially accountable inspectors, policy advisers and other specialists who are still employed after the province's downsizing has ended.

This is what people out there, this is what agencies out there are telling us. This is what agencies, long-standing Ontario agencies, are telling the government: "Don't do it. Don't leave it to the private sector." It says that the ministry would no longer be on the front line to solve complaints on behalf of people in Ontario. This is too important to let go, because it says: "The proposed legislative changes arise from major restructuring and downsizing exercises of the province. In essence, the ministry, with fewer people, will be retreating from its visible public role by shifting major responsibility to the industry to self-monitor and to deal with public complaints."

How are we going to do that? Let me ask the Premier. Let me ask the minister. How are we going to deal with public concern when we're turning the responsibility over to the private sector? I am not implying that companies in the private sector will not be able to do a good job, but we know for a fact that there are many good companies and that there are other companies that are totally inefficient, totally uncaring towards the environment in Ontario, totally uncaring in dealing with complaints from the general public. This is not a role where the government should abandon its responsibility and leave it solely, totally to the hands of the private sector.

With fewer inspectors available, it is possible that there may be an increase in unlicensed operations around Ontario. Isn't it a fact that if we were to leave it in the hands of the private sector this indeed may be the case? In our view, the changes significantly reduce the substance of the act and raise a considerable amount of uncertainty. Who can disagree with that? Who can disagree with this assertion coming from another Ontario agency to the government to tell the government, "Do not change it, don't turn it into the hands of the private sector, because for every good operator there is a bad one out there"?

We are dealing with the environment. We are not dealing solely with the issuing of a particular licence. The government says, "It's too expensive to deal with so let's turn it over to a small agency." This is a global thing. We are dealing with the environment throughout Ontario, which affects every one, every person — old, young — in our province.

I give you some notes from one of the many people we heard throughout the hearings in Ontario. As a matter of fact, when we were in Milton, which is not too far

away from where we are, just to show you how people are concerned with the environment, we had people who travelled from all the area in southwestern Ontario. You may think it's a very small affair to be concerned with, but how would you deal with a serious concern, a serious complaint, from long-standing residents of Ontario where a gravel pit has been established next door to this long-established Ontario family and now they are suffering the consequences? You know what? After a year and a half, this particular family cannot get any support, cannot get any protection and it is subject day and night to the abuses of the environment under which now they are forced to live — another particular case why we should not. I would second the intent of this presentation here from regional Niagara.

1600

We had another lady who said, "Look, there is a gravel pit; there are industrial factories; there is a school next to it. It's a very narrow road. How can you allow this to continue? You are not offering us any protection with respect to dust from morning until night, including weekends." Talk about being controlled. Inspectors, think of that. Those people have a right to live in those rural communities in peace. Imagine that some mothers or fathers have to stay home because they have to drive the kids past that particular situation because of the totally unacceptable conditions we are imposing on that particular community.

We heard from one of the local abutting municipalities, the mayor of the town, in fact — I'm not going to mention the name — expressing a countless number of concerns with respect to the environment. There are concerns out there, but the government wants to hear some concrete evidence as to why, and when you're talking of accountability, we are saying this is not the area that we should abolish our responsibility. We should be more visible out there.

When I hear members of the government side say that all of this can be accomplished without curtailing the protection, the standards of preserving our environment — well, my goodness, how are you going to accomplish all of that? You're firing half of the people, you're chopping millions of dollars. How are you going to do exactly what you said you were going to do, protect the environment, enhance protection of the environment, when you're doing exactly that? You say you want to create a balance, you want to create a better deal. This is not the way of doing it. I'm sorry, this is totally not the way of doing it.

The main intent of the bill was to create a standardized approval process. It should be very simple for members of the government side to understand that once you bring down, once you reduce the standards that we now have, we have less standards. Isn't that clear? Once you eliminate standards that we now have in place to protect the environment, we will have less standards.

But the government side is saying, "We want to have the bare minimum of standards so we can create jobs." You know the problem with this? There will be hardly anyone left very soon in Ontario where they're going to believe the Conservatives, the government side, the Premier, the minister, because up to now they did not

deliver on their promises; they absolutely did not deliver on their promises. This is an area where they do not believe the government on keeping their promise. This is one area where they can see clearly that the government will not protect the people, will not protect the environment. When you tell the people of Ontario that the only reason you're introducing this bill is to reduce the standards to their bare minimum, I have a problem; I think on this side of the House we have a problem; I think the people of Ontario have a serious problem in believing that what they are saying can be accomplished bringing the standards to the bare minimum. I have a serious problem with that. Not only that, but they're also saying, "In doing that, we are going to save money, we are going to create jobs and we are going to safeguard the environment." Is this what they said they were going to deliver? I don't think so. I really don't think so.

If it is something that they tend to perhaps get fat on this particular saying, it is that they will be doing more with less. I'd like to challenge you, Mr Minister, I'd like to challenge the Premier and I'd like to challenge every member of the government side to show me in this particular bill how you are going to accomplish that, because it's not in here. It's not in this particular bill here. You tell the House and you tell the people of Ontario how you're going to do better for less. There is absolutely nothing in here with respect to doing better for the environment with less. It is not in Bill 57.

The other reason they said is, "We're going to bring this bill because we want to bring efficiency" — efficiency — "to government." If there is an area that the government is totally turning a blind eye, let alone a number of other things — otherwise I will deviate from what's in front of us and I may be accused that I will be speaking about the unkept promises, so I will try and spend my time solely dealing with Bill 57 and the environmental protection. So let me say that while this particular bill creates some new standards, which means taking away some of the standards that we now enjoy and bringing in new ones, it really does skin practically to the bones the laws as we have them now in trying to protect the environment.

The bill will try to create a standardized approval which will allow the minister, through regulation, to exempt. This is the essence of the bill. I do hope the members seriously will support sending this bill for public hearings, and hopefully by then we can come back and they will be doing exactly what they are saying they're doing: "We want to listen to the people." I'll get to that, listening to the people, in a minute.

The regulation would exempt persons, would exempt activities, things, contaminants, substances, waste material, spills or other matters from requiring a certificate of approval under the Environmental Protection Act or under the Ontario Water Resources Act. Now, can you imagine that, relinquishing all of that authority where presently certificates of approval are required to be issued by the MOEE for a wide range of potentially environmentally harmful activities? What the government is willing to do is totally turn a blind eye when it comes to licensing some of the most important concerns with respect to the environment. But they said: "Don't worry

about it. We're going to turn it over to the private sector and they can deal with it. We're going to turn it over to the private sector and the private sector will take care of it."

They keep on telling us, "We are going to listen to the people." The fact is that they have been saying that. Yes, if there is something that I have to agree with them on, it is that, yes, they did say they are going to listen to the people. But that's where it ends. That's where it ends, because they may be saying, "We are going to listen to the people," and then they are doing exactly the opposite and doing what they want. If they would listen to the people and do what the people are saying, I'm sure they wouldn't even introduce this particular bill. They wouldn't even introduce Bill 52. Then the government side has the gall to say: "You know what? This is your Ontario. Hey, hey, this is your Ontario. This is your choice. We'll do whatever you say."

1610

Isn't that nice? The people have been saying: "We don't want this particular bill brought in. It's no good for Ontario, no good for the people of Ontario." But they say: "No, no, we are in government. This is what we're going to be doing." Once they have heard the people, the Premier gives the orders and he says: "We are going to cut here, we are going to cut there. We're going to do it because we've got to do it." Didn't they say, "We are going to listen to the people"? Didn't they say: "We are not going to cut funds for education; we are not going to cut the hospitals and other areas"? Now they are saying, "We are going to improve the environment with less resources, with less people, with less money."

Having done all that, the Premier has the gall to still come with, I believe it's the fourth document in a year, some document — perhaps it's coming from south of the border, I think he brings some connotation of Mississippi, Michigan, Minnesota and other states there.

The Premier says he's listening to the people. This commitment to use of a referendum — now he wants to use a referendum. Can you believe that? He wants to bring in a referendum. He wants to listen to the people. Then he says, "Yes, once you tell us, we're going to do what we want." This is a joke. I mean, come on.

I have to tell the Premier and I have to tell the minister, do not offend the intelligence of the people in Ontario. After what you told them you were going to do, you're doing the opposite. Don't come with Bill 57 and say, "We are going to do more for less." Do not insult the intelligence of the members in the House and the people out there. You say, "We're going to do what the people want and to prove it to you, we're going to do it by referenda." If you're so serious, Mr Premier, then why don't you call a referendum on a 30% rebate and see what the people have to say? Why don't you do that?

What you're saying is, "This commitment to use of the referendum was and is consistent with the overall objectives of our Ontario government." This is the first time I heard this, that the Premier had in mind to call a referendum on chopping funds for hospitals. He never did. Did you see a referendum? Did you? You didn't.

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): We passed legislation —

Mr Sergio: Oh, sure. You passed legislation, exactly that. You told the people of Ontario you were not going to cut education, but you passed legislation exactly that. Where was the referendum? Where was the consultation with the people of Ontario? You said you were not going to cut even one penny from the health system. How many millions did you cut?

Mr Clement: Added \$300 million.

Mr Sergio: You cut \$1.3 billion and now you want a referendum here consistent with the views of the government. I think you people are wonderful. You are wonderful. But you know what? It's all coming down to reality. You cannot fool the people of Ontario all the time. You fooled them once. You fooled them some of the time, but no more, not all the time. This is consistent. It's really consistent with the actions of this government and the actions of the Premier and their objectives, "namely, to improve accountability, reinvigorate Ontario's economy, and generally re-establish" — re-establish; that's a new word — "credibility for the institutions of government in Ontario society."

Ah, what an affront. What an affront to those agencies, to the people of Ontario. After you have decimated those agencies, you have attacked the poor, school kids, single mothers, the old folks, you're saying you want to bring credibility and accountability to those agencies and the government in Ontario?

My time is coming to a close and I can only reiterate some of the things I have already said. I hope that this will go for public scrutiny. I hope the people of Ontario will get a chance to see exactly the content of Bill 57. They will find out that the protection that is in Bill 57 — when it comes to the environment, it is not there.

I have to tell the Premier and the minister, this is not what you told the people of Ontario. This is not what you told this House. The thing is that we would be on your side supporting you if you were to do exactly what you told the people of Ontario you were going to do. Until then, we certainly can't side with the content of this bill. We can't support the content of this bill, because it does absolutely nothing to enhance, let alone protect, what we now have.

I will terminate my presentation on these remarks. I hope the government will truly go out and listen to the people and then bring their views, bring their intentions, not turn them back but put them to good use and into consideration in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Bisson: I'd like to comment on the member for Yorkview and his speech. I think the point you make in the end where you're saying that this government is doing nothing to add, nothing to strengthen, nothing trying to protect the environment and such is well taken. What basically this government is all about is creating an environment solely for the purpose of business and not looking at the balance between the need to protect our environment not only for environmental terms because we want to be able to enjoy the environment in the future but also for economic terms.

This government says, as they did under Bill 26 when they made the changes to the environmental regulations that deal with mining, as they're doing in Bill 57 and as

they've done in a number of other measures, that they are putting before the environment the interests of money. They are saying that money is more important than the environment. They are saying that the pursuit of money is the goal for all and not the need to be able to balance off the environment.

Members in the opposition, as the member for Yorkview is saying, are being told by the government members that our view is one that's against the economy, one that's the status quo, one that doesn't believe any changes should happen — not at all the case. When we were government as New Democrats, we did a number of changes in environmental regulation that dealt with the issues of red tape. I agree with the Conservative members on that one issue. There are examples within environmental legislation, as there are, I believe, in a lot of legislation, where we have found — Bill 208 under the Environmental Protection Act, where we as a government made changes that basically dealt with the mining sector in regard to liability of past holders of property.

I believe, with the government, that there needs to be some attempt to deal with how we modernize our legislation. How do we make sure the legislation indeed does what we set it out to do when the legislation was first put in place by whatever government? But that's not what you're doing. Be clear. You are here fulfilling a campaign slogan of trying to be able to create jobs, when really what you're doing is trying to do the bidding of big business. You're making the rules suit their needs, not the needs of the people and the environment.

Mr Galt: It was interesting to hear the presentation made by the member for Yorkview and also the response from the member for Cochrane South. They keep supporting each other. I really don't know why we have two opposition parties. They're so supportive of each other, they might just as well amalgamate and get together and just have one opposition party, because it's just repetitive of the same thing.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): You did the same thing with Reform.

The Acting Speaker: Order.
1620

Mr Galt: The member for Yorkview was commenting on the concerns the public has about the environment, and certainly there are a lot of concerns out there. They want the environment protected and they're concerned about the kind of process that's out there to try and protect the environment. The other day I mentioned PCBs and the processes we can get on with in treating and reducing PCBs in water — hydrochloric acid, methane — but it's a process; it's the cumbersome regulations out there that impede progress.

There was a reference made to exemptions. If I were to upset this glass of water right now I would have to report that spill, according to today's legislation. It might do some harm to the environment. You think that's a silly reference. Read the legislation. That's how it reads. You should be getting a certificate of approval for your bathroom fan, according to the legislation. It's presently being exempted. Exemptions are already being looked after by everyday activity. Consequently, don't be surprised about exemptions; they are there.

What about fans in livestock barns? Should those have certificates of approval? I think we have to be a little bit practical in how we go about addressing some of the issues, and that's why we're bringing in standardized approvals, and with those we will put in place specific regulations. Presently there are a lot of areas where you get certificates of approval. There are no regulations.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I compliment the member for Yorkview for a very good speech. I think he was able to determine what this legislation is all about and the ramifications for the province.

I want to ask him, if he gets a chance in his response, if he believes that the problem is not the legislation in and of itself but the fact that the government is also tampering with the Environmental Assessment Act to make it easier, for those who wish to develop, to get their developments through quickly and without much resistance or comment from government; or whether he is concerned about the changes to the Planning Act, which thrusts back to municipalities, which are already forced to cut staff, the job of dealing in a very shortened period of time with proposals for development which come before them, whether he sees that also as being a reason for concern when this legislation is brought forward; or whether he is concerned about the fact that the government has turfed from the Niagara Escarpment Commission five or six individuals who, when appointed, were determined to maintain the Niagara Escarpment in its present form — award-winning, recognized internationally by the United Nations; whether he is concerned about the fact that the government has dropped the program now of naming the top 10 polluters in the province, a program which isolated violators — of course, those who are not violators I think would be supportive of this, because it would contrast their environmental record with the bad actors; or whether he is concerned about the new policies option paper that appears to be floating around, designed once again to weaken environmental rules and regulations, water down past legislation and deregulate to a point where the environment is going to be damaged for the present and well into the future.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Yorkview, you have two minutes.

Mr Sergio: I wish to thank the members from the NDP side and the government side, and my colleague from St Catharines. Let me say especially to the member on the government side that the way it is today, if you spill a glass of water and you have to report it, you've got somebody there to listen to and report it to. The problem is, with the process you want to follow, that if you commit an offence, you may not have anyone to go to and take action accordingly.

In response to my colleague the member for St Catharines, sometimes we wish we had more time to mention the various points that may concern us. One major concern I have and that people out there have is destreamlining — not streamlining — the planning process. When you deal with the Niagara Escarpment, when you deal with environmental assessment practically being washed away, practically being eliminated to accommodate development in those sensitive areas, that is the big concern; that is the biggest concern. With

respect to the actions contained in the new policy action paper, it's a serious concern over there. I think the members on the government side should seriously take that into consideration.

The assessment act is a good one that protects many of those environmental issues that my colleague has mentioned before. We went through a very long process to establish the escarpment and the protection for the escarpment, and what we see now is the laissez-faire attitude of this government, saying: "You want to come in? Come and see us. Here it is. We'll let you do it." I'm sorry; this is not what the government should be doing with respect to our environment.

Mr Bisson: I want to take this opportunity to make specific comments to Bill 57, this act that primarily does two things. Before doing so, I just want to make this comment. I think one of the things that anyone in this House does as a member — and, I would say, a person interested in whatever legislation this House is dealing with — is normally ask themselves one question when looking at a bill, and I think it's the question that we have to ask at this point, and that is, who benefits? Who in the end, when Bill 57 is passed into law, will be the winners and who will be the losers? That's the approach I would like to take in being able to set out what this bill does, because primarily it does two things. Again, I ask people, I ask the members of the government and the members of the opposition listening, to keep that in mind. Ask yourself the simple question: Who will benefit when Bill 57 becomes law?

The bill does basically two things. It makes amendments to the Environmental Protection Act and to the Ontario Water Resources Act. In short, it eliminates the need to get certificates of approval on the part of certain classes of business when it comes to their operations. The other thing the bill does is it eliminates the Environmental Compensation Corp, and I'll start with that as the latter and come back to the first one.

Let's look at what we're going to be doing here when passing Bill 57, because in the end the government has the majority number of seats in this House and it will do what it will do. We in the opposition, our role in this is to try to be able to point out to the government what we think are some of the weaknesses of the legislation, or strengths, as they may apply.

On the question of the Environmental Compensation Corp and the elimination of that, I say the government should really rethink what it's doing here. They need to take a look at who is going to be affected in the end in this attempt to be able to save — we hear the numbers being bandied around that it's spent over a period of four or five years close to \$700,000 in claims and it cost about \$3 million to operate. The government says it's going to eliminate this because that was a waste of taxpayers' dollars and it didn't need to be done.

What was the Environmental Compensation Corp all about? Ask yourself that question. It was there for a very simple reason. It was there for people who were affected by spills in local municipalities. If you were the neighbour of a gas station, as a good example, and that gas station happened to leak gas on to your property, into the basement of your house or on to your property, and there

were damages and you didn't have money to go to court and to pay for the high-priced lawyers that you need to get to be able to fight this kind of litigation in court, you had an avenue that you were able to pursue to get your justice if you were trying to get it: You made an application at the Environmental Compensation Corp. It reviewed your case. Yes, that costs money because you have to have lawyers take a look at the case. You have to have the people who are knowledgeable about the issues of handling gas etc and about the very various laws look at it and say, "Is this just an attempt on the part of a person to make criticism of a situation, or does that person really have an issue here where he or she has been severely affected or adversely affected by an action of an owner of a gas station?" in that particular case.

So yes, the applicant would make the application, the person who was in this case the plaintiff, and you would end up making an application at the Environmental Compensation Corp for dollars to offset some of your legal fees to go to court. That's what it did, and never did the Environmental Compensation Corp pay huge sums of money. It was never intended to do that. It wasn't there to say this is a lottery by which people who are affected negatively by gas spills can go to it and hope they're able to recoup their losses to an entirety. That's not what it was there for. That's what the courts are for. But the ECC was there for the main purpose of helping the little guy who doesn't have the dollars to be able to hire high-priced lawyers, hire some of the best firms in this province to represent him before multinational companies which are the perpetrators, in this case, of the spill. If it happened to be Esso or Gulf or Shell Oil or whoever it might be, those people have lots of bucks. They have lawyers on staff. They have on staff the kinds of resources they need to be able to fight their liability when it comes to the spill. But the plaintiff in this case, Joe or John or Jane Public, doesn't have those kinds of dollars in many cases, and that's who you're cutting off.

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Why don't you be clear? You're saying, "I'm going to do something that's going to reward my corporate friends, those people with lots of money, and the little people be damned. We're going to give them nothing." Shame on you as a Conservative government that you would come into this House and take away the measly amount of money that it cost over the period of years, some \$600,000 that was able to give some people in this province the opportunity for justice.

I know of three cases, when I was a member in government, where people made applications to that particular fund to be able to have their day in court. I know of a case in Timmins, I know of a case in Kirkland Lake and I know of a case in Ottawa. In all of those cases, those people did not have the dollars to go out and hire a lawyer in their own right. They didn't have the bucks to do it. How do I know that? Two reasons: One, as a member I was proactive, and many people came to me, not only from my own constituency. As a government member, you would know, you get calls from other ridings. But also, it hit home. One of those people was my own father. He was involved where there was a gas station next to him that spilled gas into his basement. As

a consequence, my mom and dad were thrown out of their house in the middle of the night and they never got the house back for six years.

This is what you guys are doing. You're saying to people like that and other people across the province who were affected: "If you're trying to get your day in court, if you need the dollars to be able to go to court to fight Shell Oil or to fight any large multinational gas corporation, the heck with you. This Conservative government turns its back on you." That's what you're doing. Why don't you be clear about it?

So I ask the question, who benefits? Who benefits by taking away the ECC?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Shell Oil.

Mr Bisson: It's Shell Oil, as my friend Tony Martin says. It's the large oil companies that don't want to have the cost of litigating some of these cases where they're the people who have the liability. That's who benefits. The little guy, again, gets it in the ear, and you have the gall to run around in this province in 1995 and since then and say you're trying to do nice things for people? The only thing you're doing for anybody, you're doing on behalf of your corporate masters in the boardrooms of Bay Street and Wall Street, and you're turning your backs on the working men and women of this province, the people who need government the most. That's what you're doing. Be clear. That's what you're up to.

When this government comes into this House and says, as I heard the government members say, "This is just a matter of red tape; we're trying to fix a couple of little problems," be clear. You're doing as you always do. The corporation pulls the strings. You've got Michael Harris at the other end with his cabinet, and you're doing their bidding. That's what you're up to.

I see the ministry people in the enclave nodding their heads in the affirmative. They don't like seeing this go as well as I don't.

In this particular case, in the second part of the bill, by eliminating the Environmental Compensation Corp, what are you doing? Who benefits? Who benefits, clearly, are the large corporations, and the little guy gets it in the ear.

The second thing you're doing is that in the other major part of this legislation, under Bill 57, you have the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. Again you have to ask yourself the question: Who benefits? Who in the end is going to be the winner and who will be the loser? Ask yourself the question. And again it's the same story; it's the same picture. Somebody in the corporate boardrooms of Wall Street or Bay Street goes, "Pull the string," Mike Harris jumps up and down along with his ministers, and they scurry into the cabinet office to make changes to environmental regulation that will do what? What is this legislation going to do? It's going to say, "Certain classes of business in the province of Ontario don't need to have, in any way, shape or form, a certificate of approval, one approving that business to do business in the province of Ontario." And the government has the gall to come in here and say: "This is only red tape. These are only minor changes to the legislation so we can allow business to operate more effectively and things can go better in the province of Ontario from a business perspective."

You tell me how removing the certificate of approval process for a company that makes paint in a plant in Ontario is going to benefit the people of this province. It might benefit C-I-L, it might benefit DuPont, it might benefit one of the multinationals that operate those kinds of plants, but what would it do for the people who live around that plant, who have to live with the danger of working around chemicals?

Mr Martin: It will kill them.

Mr Bisson: I'm sure members don't have this in mind when they put the legislation in, but we know in cases where there are chemicals being handled in plants such as that, there are extreme dangers. That's why the people of this province and the people of this country entrust their politicians and their governments to protect their rights, not just the rights of Bay Street or Wall Street.

Mr Martin: They're looking after their own rights. They can look after their own rights.

Mr Bisson: Exactly. The member for Sault Ste Marie says they have the dollars to look after their own rights and they have their own money to protect themselves. They certainly do. The larger corporations have batteries of lawyers; they have rooms full of people. That's all they do: they sit there and they look at laws and they look at what's going on and they say, "How can I protect the interests of my company?" They have huge budgets to be able to do that. But Jane and Joe Public don't. That's why they elect governments; that's what government is about. It's not about protecting the interests of C-I-L or DuPont. Yes, they need to be given a climate in which they can operate and do business effectively in this province. I haven't got an argument with you on that. But we need to make sure that the government protects the little guy, that the person —

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): What's the name of that mine in your riding?

Mr Bisson: I'll get to mining in a second, but the question is, who's going to protect them? This bill, simply put, cutting to the chase and not getting into all the details, says if you're a certain class of company, you will have the right to have the government exempt you from a certificate of approval process.

The government says, "Well, there is other environmental legislation that is broader that will deal with protecting the public when it comes to those particular plants or those particular businesses that are exempted." The first problem is that the exemption is so vast it's unclear about who you're going to be able to exempt. There are people who made submissions who know this far more than I do who came before the committee of this Legislature and said, "This is not about just mom and pop's dry cleaner around the corner," or, as the member for Northumberland said, the chip stand. It could exempt companies such as paint manufacturers. That's pretty serious business.

What you're doing is you're saying first of all the exemption is way too broad, you're not defining it, so I'll put that one to rest, but you're saying, "It doesn't matter, because we have other environmental legislation in this province and we have a Ministry of Environment to be able to safeguard the rights of the individuals who live around those plants who may be adversely affected by

pollution coming from those plants." What's the problem with that? You guys are cutting half of the legislation that these people are protected under, under that broader legislation.

You already did it under Bill 26 when it comes to mining. The member talks about mining; exactly. What you did under Bill 26 is you made them a self-regulatory sector when it comes to certain matters of the environment. At this point we haven't had a problem, but I'll tell you, if you end up having some of the situations develop such as we've had in Matachewan or we had at Kamiskotia Lake or other areas, we have a real potentially big problem on our hands. Who in the end is going to pick up the tab? Is it going to be the large company? No. It's going to be the little guy, through his taxes, having to pay for the cleanup of the environmental disaster. They're all over this province. Go and take a look. You say that you're doing this on behalf of the people of Ontario. This is on behalf of the boardrooms of the province of Ontario, of Canada and of multinationals. That's what this legislation is about. It does absolutely nothing to deal with the questions of being able to deal with the rights of the individuals.

You're coupling all of this with the mass deregulation of environmental regulations across this province. The member opposite, I heard him say a little while ago, "We need to do this because it's a matter of just clearing out the red tape and making things better for business." Listen, I'm all for being able to try to find reasonable ways to be able to make sure that corporations and small businesses are not adversely affected by legislation that doesn't work well or is more onerous than it needs to be. When we were in government, as New Democrats, we did a number of examples.

I looked at the member for Sudbury East coming in, who was the Minister of Mines under Bill 208. There was a problem with Bill 208 as it applied to mining lands in that in regard to the way the bill was written, there was a danger that if you were a current owner of a mining property and there was damage done previously by another owner, you would end up picking up the liability. Our government fixed that. But we didn't try to hide behind, "We're fixing red tape and we want to make things better for the private sector," and then go around and take away their liabilities. We said to the mining companies, "You are going to be responsible for your negligence, and if you do something that's contrary to good mining practices and you do something that's contrary to dealing with the environment in a safe way, you will be punished." We didn't say, "We're going to exempt you," but this is what you guys are doing.

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Again when we were government, again under the Minister of Northern Development and Mines — and I would say a far better one than we have now — the former minister, Shelley Martel, dealt with the question of a one-window approach to permitting. You talk about red tape. We as a government, as New Democrats, said, "We hear the mining sector." When the mining sector came to us and they said, "Listen, I want to get a work permit to be able to go out and do work in the bush on a particular claim," they had to go to three, four different

ministries to be able to get their permits. We said: "We agree with you. That's nuts. We've got to change that because certainly that is not good for business and that's not good for government, because we spend more money than we need to, and how is the interest of the public being preserved or protected?" It had nothing to do with that. We said, "Fine; let's sit down with the stakeholders of the mining industry," and we did that.

Shelley Martel and myself, we travelled to Sudbury, to Timmins and other mining communities. We met with the representatives of the mining industry, the environmental movement — yes, they were at the table — the aboriginal groups — they were at the table — and we worked out a way to be able to do that. In the end we streamlined the process, that when you were doing work on a mining claim you had one window to go to. That was the Ministry of Mines, and it dealt with all of the regulatory issues that you had to deal with in getting your certificate to be able to do the work on that claim.

Now, was the mining sector totally thrilled at the end? I would say on a scale of one to 10 it was about a six. They were happy that we had made it easier for them, but I know in talking to many people in the industry, and especially in the juniors, a number of them would rather see no regulation. They would have been happier. I don't say they wouldn't have been unhappy if we had taken away all the legislation, but we said to the prospectors and we said to the developers: "We, as the province of Ontario, are here to safeguard the interests of the public of this province, and you are one citizen out of about 10 million citizens of this province. We are not going to weight the legislation towards strictly the mining company versus the people."

We found some sort of a compromise that at the end worked well, and in fact we did a whole bunch of things when it comes to dealing with regulation in the mining sector. I would say, quite frankly, that is one of the reasons why we've seen such an increase in development in the mining sector through 1993, 1994 and 1995, because our government didn't only deal on the regulatory side, as you're trying to do; quite frankly, we put our money where our mouth is. We made sure that we had programs like OMIP and OPAP that supported the mining sector so that they could go out there and do their jobs of being able to try to find new mines. We were out there supporting them any way we could: financially, through the heritage fund. Our minister, Shelley Martel, and our government were very proactive in supporting that industry.

But that's not what you guys are doing. You guys are saying, "We are going to change rules that are going to affect one class of citizen of this province and that's the corporate sector of this province." That's what you're doing. Be clear of what you're all about.

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): What happened to the heritage fund, Gilles?

Mr Bisson: What happened to the heritage fund is quite interesting. What we did with the heritage fund —

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: Here we go.

Mr Martin: That's the question of the month: What happened to the heritage fund? Where is the heritage fund? That's a good question. Ask them.

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: I would like to know where the heritage fund is. We took no pennies out of the heritage fund —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order.

Mr Martin: What happened to the heritage fund?

Hon Ms Mushinski: You bled it dry.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll not warn the member for Sault Ste Marie again. The member for Cochrane South.

Mr Bisson: For another debate we'll get into the heritage fund. But I would only say to the members across the way, what is happening with the heritage fund? When we were government we were spending the full amount of that fund for what it was intended to do, year after year, to support development of the economy of northern Ontario. You guys have done what? Zéro. Nyet. Nothing's been done since you've come to government. The north is sitting there wondering what happened to the heritage fund, so don't start on me, you guys.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Bisson: Now, getting back to Bill 57, the matter at hand, the government, as I said at the beginning, you have to ask yourself the question: Who benefits when legislation comes through? We found that with the Environmental Compensation Corp, it's the big corporate people who benefit. In this particular case it appears that the people that benefit again are the corporations and not the people of the province.

They're saying, through this legislation, what they're going to do is that they're going to eliminate the need for a certificate of approval for certain classes of companies. So that means to say that if you're going out there and you want to get a plant into operation to deal with chemicals, you won't need that C of A to be able to get the approval and you will be governed by the broader legislation that exists within the province of Ontario in order to put you into compliance.

The problem with that is twofold. First of all, as I said, you're cutting the existing regulations, so the regulations that apply to those particular companies are very much weakened and will be weakened some more as you come forward with more legislation. This is only the tip of the iceberg of what you plan to do in your attack on the environment.

But what you're doing on top of that is, what are you doing at the Ministry of Environment and Energy? How is a polluter going to get caught when you don't have anybody at the Ministry of Environment who can go out and check out what's going on? Tell me. It's amazing. You guys are standing there and you're saying, "We're all for the environment, we want to protect the environment and create jobs and help business along." But what you've done, you've cut the funding at the Ministry of Environment by 35%, you've eliminated their capacity to go out in the field and investigate what's going on out there when it comes to certain complaints that come before the ministry, and also the regular inspections that they need to do, so how is a polluter going to get caught?

You know how the polluter is going to get caught? When there's a disaster. That's how we're going to find out. Because if there's a situation that happens — we know this from experience — a company who happens to be out there is driven by a motive, and that motive is to make money. We understand that, and there's nothing wrong with making money. But if they have the choice between cleaning up their act and making sure that they're not polluting or making a profit, if it's put in those kinds of terms, they'll judge for the profit every time. And the problem that you're going to have is, the only way we're going to find out when the rules are being broken is when there's actual damage done. That's the sad part of this legislation.

I'm not advocating for a second, before a Tory member gets up in response to this and says, "Oh, the member for Cochrane South and the NDP want to send environmental cops around the province to harass all of the employers out there and all the corporations." Poppycock. That's not what it's all about. It would be pretty simplistic for you to do that. But it would be like saying we have laws in this province that say it is illegal to go and rob a store and to use a gun in doing that, and you were to then come back as the government — which you already have, by the way; you've cut policing services in this province — but it would be like eliminating the police from the scene. So the only way that you would actually ever be able to do something is — I don't know. How would you ever find out if you didn't have the police out there enforcing the laws?

It's the same thing with the environment. You need to have people out in the field who are out there inspecting what happens on a regular basis so that the companies are looking over their shoulder to a certain extent, so that the companies out there — and I don't pick on any one company — if it be a mining company, a pulp and paper company, a paint company, whatever it might be, they need to know that there are rules out there and that those rules will be enforced. If they don't have a sense that those rules are going to be enforced, they're not going to do very much to comply with the rules in the first place.

That's the problem that you're creating in your overall approach to how you're dealing with the environment. You're, through this bill, saying they don't need to get a certificate of approval in many classes of company. You're then going out and you're cutting at the Ministry of Environment 35% of their budget, and we will not have an ability as a province to monitor what happens. The problem is that we are going to get pollution problems that are going to start very little at first, I would argue, because many of the companies out there — at least in my riding, Abitibi-Price or Royal Oak, whoever it might be — tend to operate fairly good companies. They're pretty good at dealing with that because they know that the government has always been serious, and if they broke the rules they would be penalized. So they did their job.

But what is going to happen if first of all the rules are weakened, and then there's no ability by the ministry to go out and inspect? Eventually what will happen is you will have a breaking down of that system within those companies, there will be pollution that will happen over

a period of time, and by the time we find out about it it'll be too late. Who again will benefit at the end? The company can close its doors and leave and turn its back on the liability, but the people left holding the bag is going to be who? Joe and Jane taxpayer, that's who it is.

I can give you examples. For example, when we were government, again with Minister Martel, we had the tailings dam at the Hollinger stack, as we called it in Timmins, a mining company who made literally billions of dollars by taking gold out of the ground in Timmins. When they closed down they left the community with a huge environmental liability in regard to their tailings stack. When that tailings stack wall was deteriorating and it was in danger of crumbling under certain circumstances, who was left holding the bag? Who spent, what was it, \$5 million I think we spent on that, about \$5 million or \$6 million that we spent to fix that tailings stack? It was the public. That's what happens if you don't have good rules.

Again, the same thing with what we call — in front of the McIntyre mine in Timmins again, between Schumacher and Timmins, there's a huge area that was dug out to extract tailings. Because the company walked out and left us with the liability, who ends up taking up the tab if ever this thing is cleaned up? It will be the people of the province of Ontario. It'll be the taxpayer again.

So who benefits by your actions? Be clear. Who benefit simply are the people who are in the boardrooms of this province and on Wall Street. They're the ones who like this legislation; they're the ones who are applauding Mike Harris; they're the ones who are pulling the strings; they're the ones with the direct pipelines to the Premier's office and the Minister of Environment and Energy's office. Who, in the end, is the loser? The people in this province.

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I come back again to the Environmental Compensation Corp. The elimination of that particular fund needs to be re-examined by the government. The very least that you can do is — you talk about constructive criticism — rather than pulling the money out, as you're planning to do in this legislation, let the public know there's still money in the accounts of the corporation. You're taking that money and you're throwing it over to Ernie Eves, the finance minister, to help finance his tax cut at the same time. I would say that the very least you're able to do is allow that fund to be put in place and give the money to environmental groups as intervenor funding. At least we'll have somebody in the province with some dollars to assist people who are affected by spills.

I don't see how in the end the people of the province will balance with this bill. I do not see how they will be well served. We're going to lose the ability to go to court in some cases when it comes to the ECC, and in the case of the other part of the act polluters are going to get away with murder when it comes to that, all at a time when the government is doing a number of things. I'll just list some of the beautiful, wonderful, progressive things they're doing that they call red tape to deal with the environment.

They're withdrawing Ontario's ban on the construction of new garbage incinerators. They've killed the successful

green communities program. This was for the environment. They're terminating funding for the popular blue box program. They've slashed funding to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, another thing this government has done in its attack on the environment. They've eliminated funding for the municipal household hazardous waste program. They killed the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. They weakened a number of clean water regulations under the municipal-industrial strategy for abatements that were needed which were negotiated between all levels of government and our federation. They began the dismantling of the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights. They dismantled the environmental safeguards under the Planning Act. They've killed the Ontario Waste Management Corp. They've eliminated grants for environmental research. They've slashed funding for the Environmental Appeal Board. They've slashed funding to the Ontario conservation authorities by 70%. The list goes on. I've got five pages of what you guys have done in your attack on the environment.

Don't come into this House and pretend what you're doing here is minor housekeeping or that you're just clearing out red tape and you really care about the environment, because you care about only one thing. You've got the boardrooms in Canada on Bay Street and you've got the boardrooms in the States on Wall Street. They have puppeteers who sit there and pull the strings in Mike Harris's office. I see Mike Harris jumping up and down saying, "Yes, boss, whatever you want, whatever you want to make life better for the big business corporations of this province." The cabinet, when Mike comes out of that office, does exactly what he tells them and all the backbenchers line up like trained seals because they want to get into the cabinet office as badly as anybody else.

I was a government member. I know where you're coming from. Let me tell you that's not how it works. You're rewarded, at the end, in the polls by working hard to represent your constituency and by showing your cabinet colleagues and your Premier and your caucus that you're a person of integrity and that you speak up on what you believe is right, even if at times it is opposite to what your government says, even if at times you have a minority view. You have to know sometimes when to back off.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): Like you.

Mr Bisson: Yes. Darn right I did. That's why I didn't end up in cabinet.

The point I'm making is, do your jobs as members of this Legislature. I understand you need to support your government. After all, ideologically you're all the same: You're Tories — I should say Reformers. We always have to remember, when members talk about putting parties together, that you're Reformers and you believe in the corporate view of the world, but you're not doing a lot to protect individual rights of people by doing what you're doing in this legislation. I ask you to go back and talk to your cabinet ministers and, at least on the ECC, leave the money in place so there's intervenor funding out there so that you've got people with resources to deal with some effects of this legislation.

The last point I want to make, it's passing strange that the government said this is only red tape, when the government is exempting itself from any liability that might arise from deregulation. The government, in its own admission in this legislation, is saying, "We will not be responsible for any environmental disasters as a result of this legislation," because you recognize as a government that what you're doing is going to lead towards more environmental disasters and you are exempting yourself from those liabilities.

I think what is starting to happen in Temagami is the tip of the iceberg. We're seeing the environmental movement come back to life again because people are starting to really fear — and I use the word "Fear" with a capital F — what this government is doing when it comes to protecting the rights of individuals and when it comes to dealing with who benefits from what side of the equation when it comes to environmental policy. I think what will happen with this kind of legislation is you'll be reviving that movement once again to the strength that it had about 1985 to 1993, and you'll have yourself to thank for it. I would think that's not the way this province needs to go.

What we need to be able to do is to work together as communities of interest to balance the needs of the corporations, the needs of the small business people and the needs of individuals within this province towards balancing off the need of protecting the environment and allowing the economy to be able to prosper in a sustainable way. This legislation does nothing to achieve that.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I want to certainly congratulate the member for Cochrane South on a heartfelt defence of environmental integrity. As you know, this bill, if you join it together with other bills like Bill 20, which basically is dismantling the protection of the Planning Act, and Bill 26, which is dismantling conservation authorities across this province, you can see that the member for Cochrane South is very tuned in to what this government's agenda is.

As you know, this government, through its philosophy, believes in deregulation. They don't think the government has a role in regulating the economy. But we've seen what deregulation has done in the trucking industry. We know that the wheels are literally falling off the ministry because the ministry thought it could basically walk away from its responsibility. You see the consequences on our highways every day, because the government has to intervene to protect the public.

In the area of the environment, it's a matter of health protection and protection of our green fields, our forests, our waterways and our air quality. As you know, this government has also backed away from investing in public transportation. Subsequently, we have more congestion on our roads, we have constant gridlock, we have air quality problems throughout Ontario now because this government is not investing in getting people out of their cars. All it's doing is forcing more and more people to pollute our air. And who knows what else is going to happen as a result of regressive bills like Bill 57, which in the guise of trying to reduce red tape are

basically dismantling protections for the public and protection for our children and our great-grandchildren?

This government is dismantling something that is there for public protection, and that's why this bill is not the right bill.

Mr Wildman: I want to congratulate the member for Cochrane South on his presentation and to indicate that I really hope that members of the party that support the government will take his views very seriously, particularly the example he used about the handling of gasoline and gasoline spills and the experience that his own family had and many others have had, unfortunately, in this province as a result of inadequate protections and the need to be able to provide compensation to little people who do not have the resources to take companies that might be responsible to court to get compensation for damage to their properties.

It's true that the agency that is responsible for paying out compensation has not paid out a great deal. That's a good thing. But to argue that because it hasn't paid out a great deal, we should forget about those few people who might benefit from such protection I think is ridiculous.

I also want to congratulate my friend for his remarks with regard to the mining industry and the protections for the environment as related to operating mines and abandoned mines and the kinds of problems that can result from inadequate planning for shutdowns and closures of mining operations.

The member represents an area that is very important in the mining industry and he recognizes the importance of mining providing jobs and economic development in our part of the world, but he also recognizes that anybody who is going to invest in mining and is going to make profit from mining also must be prepared to ensure that mines are operated in such a way that they could be shut down in a safe manner that will protect the environment.

1700

Mr Galt: It was interesting to listen to the member for Cochrane South. It was the usual rhetoric we hear from the other side, from the backbenchers in the opposition. They're certainly still hung up on spending money. I thought that during the five-year term they were in office they had spent enough at that time, but obviously they want to collect more taxes and spend more money and get us further in debt. It was coming through loud and clear as he was speaking that he really enjoys spending other people's money.

He referred to the fact that spills compensation should be in place, and here's an example of the amount of money they gave out. They spent three to four times more in administration than they gave out in spills, yet they think that status quo is a good idea. Still supporting things like intervenor funding and pushing the spending of other people's money seems to be the way to go and the right thing to be doing.

They talk about regulations. I'm surprised they wouldn't be supporting Bill 57, because that's exactly what Bill 57 will be doing. It will be establishing specific regulations so we can bring in standardized approvals. That's what it's all about. I thought you would be very supportive of going that route.

He referred to spills and used a good example with his own parents' home, with a spill that occurred, that that's where the effort should be put into looking after spills. It's the other spills that — you know, every time a quart of oil is accidentally emptied on to a concrete floor, technically it's supposed to be reported. Unfortunately for the spills centre, they're tied up many, many hours just looking after these reports that really are totally unnecessary and not spending the kind of time that should be spent on the example he was using.

Mr Bradley: I thought the speech outlined many of the deficiencies we're seeing, some of the reasons for alarm. I heard the member reading out an extensive list that was put out by those who are guardians of the environment about their concerns with what the government was doing with environmental measures in this province. What we have to understand in this situation is that it always costs more later to rectify the problem, to reclaim a site, than it does for prevention.

A good example of this is Smithville, Ontario, where the previous Conservative government allowed a situation — they learned from this; everybody learns from these situations — where PCBs were stored in great numbers, the largest single collection of PCBs in Canada. The approvals process was not satisfactory, obviously, in that situation, and as a result it cost the province millions of dollars to reclaim that site, because it had made its way off the site, into the groundwater and possibly into the bedrock. As a result of a lack of expenditure and investment early on, or lack of looking at the approvals as carefully as one might, we have a situation that results in costing us more money.

This government seems to be preoccupied with costs incurred. I understand that. That's why I'm surprised that they would want to change the approvals process to bring about a situation where there's a greater risk of long-term costs being incurred later on.

The mine tailing situation is another good example in northern Ontario particularly, where mine tailings cause great problems for people unless they're handled appropriately. When you wink and nod through the process of looking after mine tailings, you're not going to have as good a circumstance as when you carefully assess before giving an approval.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Cochrane South has two minutes.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much to those who made comment on my presentation here in the House.

I would only say to the government member that the whole bill, about putting certificates of approval that are applicable to all classes of companies, I think is a bit of a strange approach. The reality is that C of As deal with individual realities of particular businesses, and that's why they were put in place in the first place. It's not to have just broad-stroke approaches. How do you do that? That's how we got into problems with Bill 208 as they applied to mining. At that time Environment Minister Bradley put in place regulations under 208 to try to deal with the Hagersville tire fire. When he did that for good reason — there was nothing wrong with the legislation — it was found that there were problems afterwards

that affected other classes of business. There had to be some changes there, and that's what we did.

I want to come back to what I said throughout this, that you have to consider one thing in looking at this legislation, as you do with all legislation: Who benefits? It's clear in looking at this legislation that what will happen in the end is that those who come out the winners from this legislation are not the mas and pas across Ontario, the mom-and-pop operations, not the individuals. It's the polluters and the large corporations that will come out on top. That's who's going to benefit in all cases. We're going to see it with the elimination of the Environmental Compensation Corp; again the big companies come out the winners, the little guy comes out the loser. When it comes to changing the act as it deals with the matter of C of As, it's the same thing: The big companies will end up being the winners because they'll be free to go out and pollute and they won't have a Ministry of Environment to go out there and monitor what they're going to do, and they won't be able to be charged because the regulations will be so weak. And who's going to be picking up the tab? It's going to be the little guy again, the taxpayer. That's who's going to get it in the ear.

I just want to say in the last few seconds I have that I omitted to say that a number of these measures I talked about when we were in government were also under the auspices of my good colleague Mr Pouliot, who was Minister of Mines at the time, who worked on a number of those issues with me and Ms Martel.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Let me first say how nice it is to be back in the House to debate another piece of sound, good legislation, and Bill 57 is a good piece of legislation. It's an act that will improve the efficiency of standardized approvals for our environment, improvements that represent a consistent policy to reduce excessive government red tape that constrains industry, constrains business and imposes constraints that kill the employment opportunities for the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr Stewart: Our government is once again addressing the concerns expressed to us by the people of this province. What I'm saying has to be true, because the opposition is trying to let people say too much so they can't hear. What I am saying has got to be good talk about good legislation.

Over the years I personally have opened a number of small businesses, all of which were delayed due to no clearly defined standards. Small businesses cannot afford needless delays when applying for certificates of approval. If we are to create much-needed jobs, we must make it easier for new and existing businesses to operate without being impeded by bureaucratic red tape.

There are many examples of this. One which comes to mind is the outrageous situation relating to the current system of approvals for restaurants. Previously, an owner of a restaurant would be required to wait a considerable amount of time to receive a certificate of approval for venting kitchen exhaust to the atmosphere. This wait is

ridiculous and expensive and it represents one more detriment to job creation and the entrepreneurial spirit.

Good standards must exist, and this bill maintains and addresses those standards. However, this bill will clearly define what those standards are prior to the approval process. If an applicant meets these standards when applying for a certificate of approval, then a certificate will be issued — realistic and common sense. A paint shop, for example, will be allowed to open immediately if they meet the standards set out under the act. As I learned a long time ago, you cannot get to a destination without knowing the road or the direction.

Most people may ask, what are the advantages of this piece of legislation?

1710

First, this bill will create a climate with clear and precise rules to follow, and will better protect the environment while costing the taxpayers of this province much less than is currently spent.

Second, we will focus on setting and monitoring standards. Government's role should not be in the capacity of dictating to individuals who know their business better than government. We promised to eliminate government intervention. This bill is consistent with that commitment.

Third, industry and business will now have the flexibility to use innovative ways to meet our tough standards, and I emphasize "tough standards."

Fourth, this bill dissolves the Environmental Compensation Corp. Over the past decade, the corporation has paid out an average compensation package of approximately \$69,000 a year and cost the taxpayers of this province approximately \$3 million to run on a yearly basis. Is this sound economic efficiency? I suggest to you it is not. What it is is ludicrous and ridiculous. Over the past 10 years, the ECC has only paid out 89 claims. This represents unnecessary expense and bureaucracy.

My honourable members from the opposition benches will cry foul. They will claim that our government is turning our backs on environmental protection. That is truly and totally false. But let me hasten to add that the people of this province must also be considered and protected, not necessarily and not only the environment.

Under this bill, despite the dissolution of the ECC, owners and businesses will still be responsible for the cleanup and compensation when spills occur. As well, municipalities are spending large dollars on environmental insurance, again to protect their residents.

Over the last 10 years, the ECC received 732 first notices. A first notice is the initial formal complaint an individual files to indicate dissatisfaction with the handling of a spill cleanup. Out of those 732 first notices, 558 did not follow up with an appropriate claim. This indicates that the individuals were satisfied with the manner in which a cleanup had occurred. The ECC is too expensive and, quite simply, totally unnecessary.

I want to make a comment, if I may. We're talking about, in 10 years, \$30 million in administration costs to the people of this province. That means \$10,948 was the cost of administration for all of the second notice, and it cost \$33,707 per payout over 10 years for the 89 claims. If you can tell me, ladies and gentlemen, that's good,

sound economic sense, then I've got a bridge for you to buy just across the street, because it isn't good, sound economic sense — \$33,707 in administration costs for 89 claims. I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, that is not the way I believe we should be doing business.

This bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Waste Management Corp. These changes will allow the Ministry of Environment to recover costs for some specific services. This is revenue that helps offset ministry expenditures, something that is practised every day in business. Why would we not be doing this in government? I can't understand that, ladies and gentlemen. Why would we not try to get revenue in? Isn't that the way it is?

Bill 57 represents a collaborative effort between many government ministries to improve the approvals process. Staff from the Ministry of Environment and Energy have met staff from MNR and OMAFRA, along with the Red Tape Review Commission, industry leaders, the Who Does What subpanel on transportation and the utilities regarding our proposals for the approvals process, and let me say that all of these groups are very supportive of our approach.

The days of streamlining the process through administrative changes have been exhausted. The time has come to invoke legislative changes to our approvals system. Bill 57 represents a real change to a real problem. This bill will protect the environment but not — and I repeat "not" — at the expense of employment opportunities for the people of this province. The people of this province need jobs, and let me assure you that our government is committed to that goal.

Contrary to our critics, you can protect the environment and create jobs at the same time. By creating the right legislation, they will go hand in hand. Bill 57 is good legislation. Bill 57 creates positive opportunities, opportunities to protect the environment by creating clearly defined, enforceable standards while improving the time lines for certificates of approval to preserve and expand on employment opportunities. This is good legislation. It brings environmental standards into the 1990s.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bradley: I would like to just make a slight amendment to that last statement. Back to the 1950s is where it brings environmental standards, if I can comment on the member's speech.

What was most amusing was to hear the member say that there was going to be a meeting of staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Well, that would be a mighty small meeting, because they've cut back in staff on both of those ministries so drastically that there would be few people left to be able to deal with these matters.

That's one of the problems with both the Planning Act changes and the changes to this act. If you said, "We are speeding up the approvals process and we're going to have the adequate staff to be able to deal with those," and perhaps, as the parliamentary assistant has said, "We're going to assess some fee for that service," then some people would rest assured. But what you are doing in effect is reducing the approvals process by in some cases

turning it over to municipalities, all of whom have had to cut back staff because this government is cutting back its transfer payments to municipalities. So you're asking the staff to deal with these matters in a much more expeditious fashion, and there is a situation where there are fewer staff able to do so. So we're really not going to enhance the environment.

What the member said was rather revealing. He said, "If it comes down to the environment and it comes down to economics, we're going to side with economics and not with the environment." That's the way it used to be. I can tell him, that's the way it used to be many years ago. People of this province demanded a change in that regard and we saw some legislation and regulations which were designed to change it, not the silly examples that some government members use. Certainly you can make those changes and nobody will object, but substantial changes will certainly not enhance the environmental protection in this province.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I just have a few comments for the member for Peterborough. He obviously wants the public to believe that they are protecting the environment while at the same time creating jobs. Well, I just want to go through the whole long list of commitments that this government has to the environment for the public to clearly get a sense of how committed it really is to the environment. This is the list:

They withdrew from Ontario's ban on the construction of new garbage incinerators. They killed the successful green communities program. They terminated funding for the popular blue box program. They slashed funding to the Niagara Escarpment Commission and eliminated funding for municipal household hazard waste programs. They killed the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. They weakened numerous clean water regulations under the municipal-industrial strategy for abatement. They began dismantling Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. They killed the Ontario Waste Management Corp and the province's hazardous waste reduction strategy. They eliminated grants for environmental research, and this means that made-in-Ontario technologies which protect the environment and create Ontario jobs have been put at risk.

1720

We the NDP government in the past demonstrated our commitment to green industries by supporting the environmental technologies program and the green industry strategy. They slashed funding to the Environmental Appeal Board. They slashed funding to Ontario's conservation authorities by 70%. They killed plans to prevent and control toxic substances from entering our sewers. They've killed the Municipal-Industrial Strategy for Abatement Advisory Committee. They have terminated the advisory committee on environmental standards. They can tell you they care about the environment. The facts speak for themselves.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): I was listening to the list by the member for Fort York. I think the whole shopping list he enumerates illustrates most vividly the statist solution which the previous regime took to protecting the environment: The only way you can protect the environment is the more bureaucrats, the more

regulations, the more arbitrary approval processes you have. The cost-ineffectiveness of the whole operation measures protection of the environment. In fact, streamlined, affordable, cost-effective, balanced environmental protection is the way to go. If you'd look at what's happening throughout North America, we wouldn't be in the jam we're in economically if you'd look at a more flexible, innovative approach to protecting the environment.

We've heard time and time again that the only way one can protect the environment in this province is that you must build up the number of bureaucrats, the number and layers of governmental legislation; the more prolonged approval processes you have, the better everything is. We know what happened under the previous regime: We ended up with a state of paralysis in environmental decision-making. Hardly anything ever got approved until it was stretched out five, eight, 10, 12 or 20 years. He talks about MISA being a great example of the way in which to protect the environment. This is one of the clearest, most amusing, most bureaucratic procedures of not protecting the environment. It was a great way of providing jobs for environmental bureaucrats who never came to a decision except to move it off the table. Bill 57 deals, as the member for Peterborough says, very effectively in balancing jobs and the economy.

Mr Colle: As my colleague the member for St Catharines said, I think this bill has an appropriate number, 57, because this bill is about 1957. It's about taking the province of Ontario back to 1957 and repeating the mistakes we made in the 1950s and trying to tell the people of Ontario that was the perfect era. You know what we did to the environment in the 1950s and 1960s? We started ourselves on the road to many costly clean-up consequences in the 1980s and 1990s. This is going back to the 1950s.

This is the same government that has dismantled the Ministry of Environment. There is no Ministry of Environment. They got rid of the minister for whatever reason; I don't know. I don't know if anybody's left up at St Clair and Avenue Road, because that ministry has been gutted by \$200 million. The member for Northumberland must be there by himself. He must be the only person with an office there. He must be rattling around that building. They should perhaps turn it into a condominium or something. Sell the building. What good is it having that building if there's nobody in it?

Maybe the most productive thing the parliamentary assistant can do is put a For Sale sign on that building at St Clair and Avenue Road and come clean with the people of Ontario that there is no more Ministry of Environment, that this ministry's run from the office of Ernie Eves, the finance minister, because they're taking money out of the environment and paying that tax cut to their friends on Bay Street. That's what this bill is part of: dismantling environmental protection at the risk of the health of Ontarians because these people do not understand that good environmental planning is also good economic planning. They don't see the connection.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Peterborough has two minutes to respond.

Mr Stewart: It just blows my mind how the opposition can sing the praises of the status quo, just absolutely blows my mind when I just got finished telling you about \$30 million in 10 years to address 89 claims.

But I wanted to make a comment to my colleague or my friend the member for St Catharines. I didn't mention the Ministry of Energy. If he would pay attention, instead of doing this hassling back and forth, he would know that. I want to just bring that up because the standards that we're talking about in Bill 57 are clear standards that are going to guide the environmental process for a lot of years to come. I hear this fact that it takes it back to 1950 and 1957. I suggest to you that this is totally wrong and totally ludicrous, because unless those standards are in place — and those are good standards and tough standards — how can you decide how to deal with them?

That's what this bill is all about: knowing up front, whether it be in business or whatever, what we have to do to make sure we protect the environment but also protect the taxpayer of this province. Isn't that what we all represent? I thought we did and I guess that's what I'm suggesting to you. These are the right standards, they are the tough standards and, I can tell you, as I said at the end, will take environment and environmental direction into the 1990s.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. Just to help the member for Peterborough, it is the Ministry of Environment and Energy; they've been connected for some time.

As I get a chance to speak about this bill, I have listened intently most of this afternoon and last week to the debate and I find the government's stance most remarkable. They keep talking about standards. Of course, this bill does not provide standards. They are not there; they are in the regulations. The regulations are presently being gutted. The regulations are presently being moved to the bare minimum. There is no public review of these regulations. There is not the ability of people to say this is the right thing or the wrong thing. This is not about streamlining. This is not about making it easier. This is about mortgaging our children's future. It's about mortgaging the environmental heritage we have. This government is pretty unique on these —

Mr Wettlaufer: Mike, what did you do? You borrowed \$22 billion and increased taxation.

Mr Michael Brown: No, no. This is a government that's going to add \$22 billion to the debt of this province, but I would suggest to you that if you look at the environmental effect, the \$22 billion in debt that they'd leave to the next government will pale in the effect of what happens to our environment. The members are right, and I've listened to the member for Oakwood, and the member for St Catharines especially, talk about bad environmental legislation or minimal environmental legislation. All it does is transfer the cost to some future generation. We've seen that. We should have learned our lesson when it comes to dealing with environmental issues.

It's like not funding a pension plan; it's like not making the payments to the Ontario public service

pension plan; it's like not making payments to the Ontario teachers' pension plan. What happens when you don't do that? You've got a huge problem. These guys over here, the Tories, should know all about both issues because they did not fund either one of the pension plans and left it to other governments to clean up in the future. It cost taxpayers of Ontario billions upon billions of dollars to refund these pension plans to a level that would actually ensure that the people who were guaranteed these pensions got them. The same thing is going to happen here with this environmental legislation.

1730

One word I've never heard from this government, that I haven't heard from any speakers from the government side, is "excellence." They don't understand excellence. They want to be the bare minimum. That's their goal in life. Their goal in life is to just barely get by. This used to be a province that built things, that had the best education system, the best health care system, the best environment. It used to be a province that paid its bills, a province where the future was hugely bright. Instead, what we have is a government that's going to borrow an additional \$22 billion and add to an environmental deficit across the province because their vision of the future is to be mediocre. What a bunch of — anyway, I'll speak specifically to the bill.

Bill 57, as you know, is somewhat deceptive in that it does not provide the regulations. The regulations are not here. It's just a framework. Regardless, if these regulations just happened to be reasonable, providing a reasonable standard, you know what? Nobody's going to know there is not an inspector who will ever find out. They have cut \$200 million from the Ministry of Environment. It is a shell. It's kind of there but I don't know where to go and look.

I have people in my constituency today who cannot develop land, not because the Minister of Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources object to the proposal but because, after the development takes place, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment say to them: "We do not have the staff to monitor it so we will not be able to tell whether you have met your obligations. Therefore we're not going to let you do it. We're not going to let you do it because we have no way of monitoring it." Do you think that's good for the economy of Manitoulin and the North Shore of Lake Huron? Do you think that kind of approach makes any sense in a business way?

I would like to tell you I don't think so. I think the public demands, my children demand, my grandchildren demand that they have a future that is strong economically, full of opportunity and that the environment they inherit from us will be better than the environment we inherited from our parents. We are going to be held accountable by those people.

Government is the only institution — I want you to think about this — to have a mandate to look after the future. Companies, corporations, business people, individuals look after themselves in the present but the government, if there is any institution, has to look after our future. This government is abrogating its responsibilities for short-term, what it believes to be economic gain. I

don't think it will. If you look at jurisdictions around the world, the most progressive, the ones with the best economy, are also the ones with the highest environmental standards, the highest goals for their citizens to meet. That's because those jurisdictions understand that good environmental management is synonymous with good economic activity. This bill says let's be mediocre. Let's put in the minimum. Let's make sure this province could not possibly be better than any other province.

What a goal. What a lofty vision. It is about mediocrity at best. I don't think the people I represent are going to be overly impressed with that approach. Look at a constituency such as mine. We have our share of, I wouldn't say problems, but at least areas that we need to have a very close look at. We have mines, we have mine tailings. We have experienced in the Elliot Lake area over the last few years, unfortunately, the closure of all the major mines. They're uranium mines. Those uranium mines need to have a very careful plan to look after the tailings in perpetuity. That is happening; at least I think it's happening.

As environmental enforcement is sacrificed by this government, I don't know how we can be sure that it will in perpetuity be monitored so that we don't have some of the very real problems we've experienced, for example, at Cutler on the Serpent River reserve, where untold millions of dollars were spent moving contaminated soil from the reserve. The member for Algoma would know all about that particular project. It cost the government — the government doesn't have any money, so it cost the taxpayers, you and me and everybody else here — millions upon millions of dollars so that environmental problem could be rectified.

I don't want to see a regime in Ontario today where that kind of deficit can be passed on again. I think this bill provides that opportunity.

I want to talk to the members for York and Durham and Peel, those areas where not too long ago we were talking about mega-dumps. Maybe we still are talking about mega-dumps. One reason those never went ahead was the fact that the environmental assessment legislation was what it is. Maybe you can say that's bad for business, but I think the people in York and Durham who would have been anywhere near these sites would suggest to you it was pretty good legislation.

Mr Colle: Keele Valley.

Mr Michael Brown: Keele Valley, my friend says. This legislation, the Environmental Assessment Act and its processes, protected those. My friends from down here in the city of Toronto and Metro Toronto never had to worry about that because the dumps weren't going to go here, but it was going to help them if they could send it off to those dumps. Instead, we got recycling projects; we got good environmental management.

Mr Hastings: We got costs. The blue box — give us an example of waste.

Mr Michael Brown: Well, we got costs. The member says we got costs, and he's right. Environmental management does cost money.

Mr Hastings: Yes, but we want to make it effective.

Mr Michael Brown: He says he wants to make it effective.

Mr Hastings: It wasn't under the blue box program for at least three years.

Mr Michael Brown: He doesn't like the blue box program. The Tories don't like the blue box program.

I want to talk a little bit about the Environmental Compensation Corp, with which I've had some rather unhappy dealings. I had a constituent with a service station. It ended up costing this poor fellow the sale of his service station even though he had not contaminated it, and he could not get compensation from this corporation. I think the problem with this corporation was not the idea; it was the way it was working. This fellow actually is from the Ottawa area, but as you know, thousands upon thousands of people have come to beautiful Elliot Lake to retire. This gentleman moved to Elliot Lake, hopefully was going to sell his service station in Ottawa. The deal all fell through. I won't go through all the wrangling about that, but essentially it came down to environmental issues. The contamination did not come from the service station, and he still was left on the hook. The poor fellow is almost bankrupt because of course his business was his retirement. He was unable to sell it. I'm not sure whether he's ever been able to sell it. Maybe it's gone bankrupt now. I think that's one of the problems.

1740

What was needed here is not the elimination of the corporation, but exactly what you seem to be talking about, and that's efficiencies and streamlining, getting it to give you the kinds of answers you want in a timely manner. Obviously, from my point of view and this particular constituent's point of view in Elliot Lake, that didn't happen. But that doesn't mean you should throw the baby out with the bathwater. It was a good idea. It was a Conservative idea, for goodness' sake. It came from the Conservative government, it was passed by a Liberal government, and it was followed by an NDP government. It was your idea. So spend some time and make it work. Don't just eliminate it. It's necessary.

I in my own constituency have huge difficulties, as I suspect just about everyone does, with gasoline stations. I was talking to owners of a gas station in Spanish who recently had to put in new tanks, and they went through a large cleanup that was not caused by them but by previous owners before them. We're talking back 20 or 30 years. They did that. What did they find that was really quite astounding? They could not get the Ministry of Environment to certify that it had been cleaned up. Can you imagine that? You spend \$30,000 or \$40,000 cleaning up the site. It's clean. The engineers come in and say, "It's fine, no problem." All they wanted was a certificate saying: "Yes, you've done the work. You've rehabilitated the site. It's good." Can you get a piece of paper saying, "Yes, it's cleaned up; it's perfect"? Not a chance. No staff. People are not able to do the environmental projects and get the kind of approvals they need. If you were addressing those kinds of issues, I wouldn't have a heck of a lot of trouble with this piece of legislation.

I think you should put all your cards on the table, tell the people what the regulations are, point out which ones are the foolish ones. Sure, there are foolish ones. Over 30

years, all legislation gets foolish regulations. Fix them. That's not a problem. But don't destroy the entire environmental assessment and approvals just because of a few rather strange examples.

With that I think I'll yield the floor. I know that time is running out today and I know the House leader for the third party has indicated he would like a few minutes to speak.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I negotiated that deal between the member for Algoma-Manitoulin and our House leader and now I'm taking some of his time.

I just want to be very brief, because I was unable to be in the House today to hear other people's comments. I heard that the member for Hamilton Mountain was complaining that I wasn't here. I assume that he thought I might be converted to the Tory idea of clear-cutting environmental protection in this province. What I want to say today to all members of the House is that any government where the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment stands up in the House in the middle of a debate like this on environmental protection and says that cutting down trees has nothing to do with the environment — "That's over there in natural resources" — has absolutely no credibility with me and with this party and, I would say, all Ontarians.

So I look forward to the comments from my colleague, if there is time for him to do that, and I'll sit down now and thank everybody for their attention to this bill.

Mr Galt: It's interesting to hear the critic from the NDP. I was trying to refer to the Ministry of Environment. I appreciate your comment, and if I said it that way, I stand to be corrected. I was referring to the Ministry of Environment at the time.

I was very pleased with the presentation the member for Peterborough made a little while ago. He really had a handle on the problem, understands it; it was delivered very well, and he stayed on topic. That's something pretty rare in this House as I listen to members from across the floor. Rarely are they on topic. They talked about everything from soup to nuts but seemed to miss the topic of Bill 57. Obviously the member for Peterborough was very well prepared in his presentation and understands the importance of tough standards.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Who wrote that? Mr Ford from the floor of the exchange?

Mr Galt: Right here. The member for Peterborough put it together. He packaged it himself. He talks about the need for tough standards with the approvals.

I was interested in listening to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin talk about our grandchildren and what they were going to inherit and the kind of debt that was being left for them. That's what this government is all about, trying to correct the evils of what's gone on for the past 10 years. The debt you people have created is absolutely phenomenal, one we're trying to get under control, a deficit we're trying to end. It's one that has been out of control now for a good 10 years. I know you bragged that one year you almost balanced the budget. With the kind of inflation and the kind of taxes that were coming in, that's when you should have been salting it away and knocking down some of the debt. There was no reason in the world that you shouldn't have got the

deficit under control then and wiped out a good portion of the debt.

Mr Colle: I couldn't help but comment that this is the government that claims to be so interested in the debt and the deficit, yet they've gone and ballooned the deficit by borrowing \$22 billion to pay for that tax cut. So don't talk about credibility on the deficit. You've just ballooned it by \$22 billion.

To get back to Bill 57, what is happening here is that if you look at this government's approach, it's downloading responsibility to the municipal government. Municipal governments have been cut back, they're going to have few enforcement officers, so you're going to have a hodgepodge of laws and a hodgepodge of different enforcement levels.

I wonder what this government will do with the smoking ban. Let them see what this philosophy will do to that type of thing. In my own municipality, on one side of the street, come January 1, you can smoke till the cows come home. On the south side of the street, there is no smoking.

This is the government that says, "We'll leave it up to the local municipalities to take care of environmental concerns." It's going to be a nightmare, it's going to be a checkerboard effect in every city and municipality, because this government is walking away from its responsibilities of having uniform provincial guidelines. Instead, it's going to download everything from roads to the inspection of restaurants to municipalities that can't afford the bylaw officers. Right now municipalities can't inspect environmental concerns about restaurants that stink up neighbourhoods. How are they going to do it with more cutbacks and more work thrust upon Etobicoke, York, East York, Peterborough? How are they going to do it with no staff, no money and no Ministry of Environment, just a hollow shell up there at Avenue Road and St Clair? Sell the building and make it into a condo.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? Would the member for Algoma-Manitoulin care to wrap up?

Mr Michael Brown: I appreciate the comments from the member for Oakwood, the member for Riverdale and the member for Northumberland.

I still didn't hear the parliamentary assistant say the word "excellence." I still didn't hear the parliamentary assistant talk about leaving our children the best environment in the world.

He rambles on in this Conservative mantra about debts. The fact is that his government has already borrowed more money than a Liberal administration did in five years. Get real. The same kind of philosophy is going to affect our environment. A Conservative government set up our pension plans; they didn't pay for themselves — left it for somebody else to fix. A Conservative government set up an environmental regime that cost the taxpayers millions, probably billions, in this province to clean up, and the Conservative government is about to do the very same thing all over again in the name of expediency. I think that should be unacceptable to all Ontarians. Let's hear a little chatter over there about excellence. Forget the spin doctors. Look at the real information. Come out and tell us the real goods. My goodness, we'll be supporting you if you do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wildman: In the large amount of time I have left, I would like to make a couple of comments. First, I think it's significant when we look at this deregulation bill before the House that we understand that the government in this legislation is exempting itself from any liability that may arise from this deregulation. Section 177.1 of the Environmental Protection Act, the new section, basically means that this government will be exempt from any liability that arises out of this act.

If this government were sure they are going to be able to properly protect the environment while at the same time deregulating, why are they putting a specific exemption from liability for the government into the legislation? I think that tells it all. This is part of an attack on the environment that this government is waging in Ontario. It's part of a long list: This government has lifted the ban on the construction of new garbage incinerators, killed the green communities program, terminated funding for the blue box program, slashed funding for the Niagara Escarpment Commission, eliminated funding for municipal household hazardous waste programs, killed the Clean Up Rural Beaches program, weakened clean water regulations under the municipal-industrial strategy for abatement; it has dismantled environmental safeguards under the Planning Act; it has killed the Ontario Waste Management Corp and the province's hazardous waste reduction strategy; it has eliminated grants for environmental research. The list goes on.

This is a government that claims it is cutting the deficit. What it is doing is providing us with a deficit for the environment, an environmental deficit that will plague the current generation and future generations of this province. The government doesn't recognize that if you don't ensure prevention, it costs you more when you have to clean up, and that's what this legislation is going to result in.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments? Further debate?

Minister Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 57. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1754 to 1811.

The Deputy Speaker: You're voting on the motion of the Honourable Norm Sterling, second reading of Bill 57. Would you rise one at a time. All those in favour?

Ayes

Baird, John R.	Ford, Douglas B.	Martiniuk, Gerry
Barrett, Toby	Froese, Tom	Maves, Bart
Beaubien, Marcel	Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn
Boushy, Dave	Gilchrist, Steve	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Brown, Jim	Grimmett, Bill	Ross, Lillian
Carr, Gary	Guzzo, Garry J.	Shea, Derwyn
Carroll, Jack	Hardeman, Ernie	Sheehan, Frank
Chudleigh, Ted	Hastings, John	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Jackson, Cameron	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Danford, Harry	Johnson, David	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Johnson, Ron	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Jordan, W. Leo	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fisher, Barbara	Klees, Frank	Wood, Bob

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Grandmaître, Bernard	Martin, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 45; the nays are 20.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'd like to refer this bill to the standing committee on resources development.

The Deputy Speaker: So be it.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1816.

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Président
L'honorable Ed Doyle

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Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 1996

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS TRADUCTEURS ET INTERPRÈTES

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I am pleased today to recognize St Jerome's Day —

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Excuse me. I am just going to recognize you here. Pardon me. I just want to make sure that I get it right.

Mr Grandmaître: And I get the amount of time that I'm supposed to.

The Speaker: The Chair recognizes Bernard Grandmaître from Ottawa East.

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and congratulations.

I'm pleased today to recognize St Jerome's Day, named after the Christian saint of translators. September 30 has been declared National and International Translation Day by the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council and the International Federation of Translators, a worldwide organization having consultative status with UNESCO.

Here in our province, members of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario have been undertaking the valuable work of translating and interpreting since 1921. ATIO, which presently has about 1,000 members, is the oldest translators' association in Canada and the first in the world to attain legal status for its members in 1989.

La capacité de communiquer en nombreuses langues, compte tenu des particularités culturelles de chacun, est un facteur de toute première importance pour l'harmonie sociale et pour le développement de notre province.

Je profite de cette occasion pour rendre hommage aux membres de l'ATIO qui, de par leur travail dans les secteurs public et privé, contribuent si précieusement à l'atteinte de ces objectifs.

ELECTION IN YUKON

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Today we awoke to the good news that in yesterday's election in the Yukon, the New Democrats were returned to a majority government. I say "to the good news" because it's quite important to note that in winning that very clear majority government, they defeated the Reform-minded, conservative Yukon Party.

I think there is a lesson there for the government that sits across from us, because just like voters in the Yukon

rejected an attack on workers' rights and a right-wing conservative fiscal policy and agenda, so too the day will come in Ontario when we will see the same turfing out of a government that attacks workers, of a government that tries to deal with the problems it has on the backs of the average citizens across the province.

In congratulating Piers McDonald as the new leader of the government party in the Yukon and the new government in the Yukon, we also again I think want to send out a warning to the members across and to the leader of this party that they cannot continue to dismantle, piece by piece, the very fabric of this society and expect that the voters at the end of the day will not remember their actions. We will be here to remind them, but more importantly the people of the province will be here to remind them at the next election.

SOUTH SIMCOE SCHOOL

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): It's with great pride that I rise to address the House today. This summer, on June 6, the South Simcoe public school in my riding of Oshawa celebrated its 80th anniversary.

Principal Sandra Dean has provided the initiative to see that the school is well prepared to enter the 21st century. Working together with community partners, this school has developed innovative education methods and has become a role model for other schools.

Ground is certainly being broken with the employability skills program which brings business managers into the school to teach students employability skills. The students also run their own school store, which provides exposure to those entrepreneurial skills. This innovative approach to education has attracted attention locally, nationally and at the international level.

Through initiatives such as these, the South Simcoe school of Oshawa has won the Conference Board of Canada Provincial Award and the Conference Board of Canada National Award. The partnerships forged between this school and the Oshawa business community have been exemplary.

The list of awards continues as the South Simcoe school received the Durham Board of Education's Director's Gold Award and the Bruce Mather Award, yet more awards for excellence in community partnerships and the professional development of others.

I am proud to say this school from Oshawa provides a shining example for all schools across the province to follow.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Yesterday in the House I asked the Minister of Health to release his

submission to the Health Services Restructuring Commission in regard to its hospital closure decisions in Thunder Bay. Although the minister refused to release his position and in fact would not discuss its contents, we finally obtained a copy today.

Now it becomes clear why the minister was stonewalling us. The submission, signed by the Deputy Minister of Health, says, "The ministry supports the report and its directives and will work with the commission, hospitals and district health councils to ensure that the directives are met."

So we do not just have a staff report, as the minister stated yesterday, but a letter signed by the Deputy Minister of Health. It's not a bunch of data that would take 10 hours to explain, as we were led to believe by the minister; it's a three-page letter the minister could have easily outlined for the House.

It's what's missing in the submission that also causes concern, and that is there's no reference to funding, no reference to the fact that the Ministry of Health changed its capital funding policy for hospitals on the very day that the Thunder Bay report was released. On that date the ministry reduced its capital funding from two thirds to one half, which in Thunder Bay terms means that what was thought to be \$48 million in provincial capital support on June 27 actually changed to \$36 million in support.

What we have is a minister who submitted a report supporting cuts to Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario health services and a minister who cut funding for any redevelopment on the very day those cuts were announced. It's time for this minister and his ministry to be up front with all of us.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I rise today in regard to the announcements the government made yesterday in regard to the hospital restructuring committee in Sudbury. The minister stood in this House yesterday, and I heard through interviews afterwards that he didn't feel that the services offered to the region through the Sudbury hospital system would be affected.

I'm here to tell the minister directly that, yes, it will affect services, because what the government is proposing to do in closing the two hospitals, Sudbury Memorial and Sudbury General, will remove 200 acute care beds out of the Sudbury system, which is not only there to serve the people of Sudbury but is there to serve the people of the entire northeastern region. When you take 200 acute care beds out of the system the way you're doing, Minister, it means that people in Timmins, Iroquois Falls, Cochrane, Kirkland Lake who are referred to that hospital for everything from cardiac care to cancer care will have a much more difficult time getting beds in the system in Sudbury so that they can be treated. We already know that there are problems existing within the system as it is now in regard to waiting lists to get into those services. I don't see how for one instant what you are doing in regard to the reduction of budgets of those hospitals will do anything else to be able to deal with it.

1340

Should there be hospital restructuring? Yes. Sudbury's not the first to go through it. Timmins and other communities such as Sault Ste Marie have gone through that process already. But the dollars that you take out of the

system must be reinvested in northeastern Ontario so that people in the northeast are able to get access to health care services. What you are doing is stealing the money, putting it in the Treasurer's pocket, and helping to pay for a tax break at the expense of the people of northeastern Ontario.

STUDENT EXCHANGE

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I'm proud to inform the House of an exciting international link forged by Lambton College in Sarnia-Lambton: Lambton College in Sarnia, the St Clair County College in Port Huron, Michigan, and Universidad Tecnologica Americana in Mexico City. The agreement joining together the three schools links the development of programs, gives opportunities for student and staff exchanges, and encourages joint proposals to three governments for funding. It's a long-term agreement that establishes an international trade program in which students spend a year at each facility completing their education.

As Lambton College president Dr Tim Easley said so accurately, "In the era of free trade, having an understanding of our trading partners is clearly a step up in a global economy." This is NAFTA coming to Sarnia-Lambton.

This agreement is about working together, mutual understanding and cooperation. International agreements are the wave of the future, and Lambton College has once again proven its forward-looking vision. I congratulate the college for fostering a deeper understanding of other nations and offering its students a truly unique educational opportunity.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The newest target of the Mike Harris Conservative machine appears to be the amateur sports community in Ontario, that group of individuals who spend countless hours organizing and operating positive, healthy, constructive programs and activities for children and adults alike in our province.

Yesterday I quoted from an article in a major metropolitan daily newspaper detailing insulting comments made by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Let me share with members who may not have had the opportunity to be here the comments of the MPP for Brampton South. The article reads as follows:

"Amateur sports groups in Ontario are welfare recipients who have to be taken off the dole, says Conservative MPP Tony Clement.

"It's like a welfare dependency, a business welfare dependency," Clement told the Star in an interview."

Well, I thought the best response that I've heard so far was from the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore. He said the following:

"That shows Tony's lack of feeling. He's just a hatchet man for the Harris government," added Kells, who doesn't have much faith in Mushinski's qualifications for the job, either. "Mushinski's really only there to disassemble the...thing."

Sometimes the most telling remarks come from the government benches. In this case, the government benches have responded best to the minister and her parliamentary assistant.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I remember Mike Harris promising in the Common Sense Revolution and during the campaign that there would be no cuts to health care. And I remember the Conservative candidate in Sudbury during the election saying that if the Tories were elected, all three Sudbury hospitals would be kept open. My, how times have changed in Sudbury.

Yesterday, the local solution which had been arrived at after two and half years of work by community members was thrown entirely out the window, and the minister's hatchet commission is now trying to impose a "made in Toronto" solution in our community. Two of the three hospitals will be closed; 206 acute care beds will be closed. Only one third of the savings to be achieved are to be sent back to the community, if the minister agrees. There will be hundreds of health care workers who will lose their jobs, and the quality of health care in our community and in northeastern Ontario will be affected.

Sudbury's position and ability to act as a regional referral centre is being put in jeopardy. We treat patients from across northeastern Ontario, especially for cardiovascular care, and with 206 acute care beds being lost, it will be very difficult to continue to treat other northerners.

Sudbury is going to lose, at best, up to \$29 million annually under the scheme proposed by the Tories. At worst, the figure will be \$42 million if Jim Wilson tries to take all of the savings to help finance the tax cut.

People in Sudbury were betrayed by this Conservative government. They thought there would be no cuts to health care. They found out yesterday that you can't trust this government on that score.

BREAST CANCER

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): As the members are aware, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In 1996, more than 7,100 Ontario women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 2,000 will die. Across Canada, 18,600 women will be diagnosed and 5,300 women will die with breast cancer.

Our government made a commitment in the spring budget to expand programs to aid in the early detection and treatment of breast cancer and will provide additional funds to treat women with breast cancer. This government wants to help women become more aware of the importance of methods of early detection, such as self-examination and the Ontario breast screening program. The Ontario breast screening program, which screens women over 50, has one of the highest detection rates in the world. We should all encourage the women we know who are over 50 to enrol in the program and be screened at one of the 18 centres across the province.

Breast cancer does not just affect women. The husbands, children and families of these women are also affected.

For the first time in history, lung cancer will be the leading cause of death among women. Breast cancer is second only to lung cancer. It is the intent of this government for breast cancer deaths to continue to decline. This issue remains a challenge, and our government will continue its fight against breast cancer.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Statements from ministries. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and might I congratulate you at my first opportunity on the good job you're doing running the House.

I rise today to announce this government's intention to fulfil another key commitment made to the people of Ontario. Long before the advent of the Common Sense Revolution, people told us that Ontarians are among the most overgoverned people in the world. We heard repeatedly that government at every level had become too big, too cumbersome, too costly and too unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of the people who pay for it, the taxpayers.

We had accumulated extra politicians, administrators, civil servants and officials over a very long period of time. It was an era in which the answer to each of society's problems seemed to be to add more programs, spend more money, build more buildings and put more people behind more desks to push more paper.

We know today that adding more politicians, creating more bureaucracy and spending more money has not solved our problems as a province. Rather, these costs have added to our debt load, and if they are allowed to continue to mount, they'll be passed on to our children. So today we're taking another definitive step to reduce the size and cost of government and to do better with less. Today, my colleague the government House leader will be tabling legislation which will see provincial riding boundaries aligned with their federal counterparts before the next election. The result will be to reduce the number of provincial politicians from the current 130 to 103.

The message is this: Savings will start at the top. Everyone must and will share in our common struggle as a province and a people to balance our books once and for all. This step, together with others we have taken since forming the government, means that restraint will be shouldered from the highest level of Queen's Park on down. This is only right and it's only fair. It is leadership by example.

1350

This initiative adds to the growing list of actions taken by this government to reduce the size and cost of government on behalf of Ontario taxpayers: We scrapped the MPPs' gold-plated pensions and the tax-free allowances, and reduced our own pay by an additional 5%; we appointed the smallest cabinet this province has seen in 30 years; we have reduced internal government adminis-

trative costs by \$200 million so far; we have saved \$80 million to date by requiring government agencies, boards and commissions to operate more efficiently; and we have imposed strict limits on government advertising and publications.

Together with our measures to rein in spiralling program spending, these steps keep us firmly on track towards a fully balanced budget in fiscal 2000-01. At the same time as we are shrinking the public sector, we are cutting taxes to create jobs and reducing barriers to economic growth. This is our plan, and while we still have a long way to go to reach our goal of a better Ontario, the evidence is there for all to see: Our plan is working.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): It is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the government of Ontario to recognize International Day of Older Persons. It is a day to say thanks to more than one million Ontarians who are over the age of 65, men and women who have taught in our schools, built our homes, assembled our cars, produced the food on our tables, fought wars to save our freedom and made this such a wonderful province in which to live.

This government is committed to the elderly. That is why Premier Mike Harris decided to appoint a minister of his cabinet solely responsible for Ontario seniors.

That is why we've invested \$170 million to provide more accessible, simplified, long-term care, providing health care services at home for another 80,000 people.

That is why we moved to protect the viability of the provincial drug plan, as the last province in Canada to ask those who benefit from this insurance plan to share in the cost of the premiums. In doing so, we have been able to add 275 products to the Drug Benefit Formulary — that's nearly 20 new drugs every month this government has been in office — and it is seniors who have benefited most from this initiative.

Finally, that is why my honourable colleague the health minister, Jim Wilson, has undertaken a major health care restructuring review that will reallocate funds to the front-line, direct health services, including \$20 million for pneumonia prevention immunization for seniors; \$15.5 million to reduce waiting lists for cardiac care — those surgery lists will be reduced by one third — \$25 million to expanded kidney dialysis services; and almost eliminating previous waiting lists for cataract surgery for Ontario seniors.

It's called good health care management, it's patient-centred and it's achieved by a government not afraid to make tough decisions in its determination to do what the people of Ontario told us they wanted: Provide better service and better access at lower cost.

In the summer, my colleague the Minister of Health attended a meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial ministers in Fredericton. The group collectively agreed that future policies developed for seniors should be guided by five basic principles: dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security. This is the template this government will use as we work towards the year 1999, which the United Nations has declared International

Year of Older Persons. Dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security — this is what we owe our seniors.

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Mr Frank Micalash (Kenora): I must say to the Premier that this is certainly a sad day for people in northern Ontario. During the campaign, in your document here — you called it *A Voice for the North* — you said you would give northerners a greater say on policies which affect them. Today you have, in essence, told us that our representation in this House will be cut by one third. Giving northerners a greater say is not what I'm hearing is happening. Your government refuses to meet with municipal associations, mayors and reeves. As a matter of fact, Mr Premier, even in the last campaign your candidate in the Rainy River riding suggested that this would never happen. May I quote:

"PC candidate Lynn Beyak certainly pooh-poohed that scenario in the final days of the campaign, claiming any talk of the ultimate demise of Rainy River riding was fearmongering by desperate politicians. In fact Lynn told voters at an all-candidates meeting here that she'd fight such suggestions tooth and nail." Mr Premier, this is a candidate who ran for you in the past campaign.

More important, do you actually realize that redistribution will give one member of this House, the member representing the Kenora-Rainy River riding, one third of the land mass of the entire province? That's over 307,560 square kilometres to one member in this House. That's bigger than the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island put together — bigger than those land masses put together.

Mr Premier, I must say to you that this is certainly an insult to the intelligence of northerners. You're cheating the citizens of northern Ontario and they will not stand for it.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): This is all about increasing the executive branch of government's power at the expense of the legislative branch. It's putting more power into your office and your backbenchers know that. That's all this is about. It's about downsizing democracy, Mr Premier; it's you walking away from democracy. That's what this bill is all about because all you want to do eventually is replace all of us with 1-800 numbers and that's the kind of government you want, Mr Premier.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'd like to respond to the minister for seniors programs and also recognize the International Day of Older Persons and, as he said, say thank you to our seniors for without them we would not have the kind of society we have.

I notice that the minister has developed a fairly selective list of activities of what the government has done for and to seniors. I would like to complete that list and remind you that when you say you have compassion, when you say you're concerned about dignity, I think there are a variety of areas in which that falls down.

I would remind you of the cutbacks, of the 21.6% in social assistance that seriously affects seniors at the

moment. The new user fees for drugs, for example, has an impact on those seniors who need a great deal of medication, and as those dollars add up and you're on a fixed income, and it's less than what it was a year ago, that means a lot to seniors.

But cuts to Para Transpo affect many seniors who can now not afford to pay for their own transportation for other areas. Some of the cuts to the chronic care beds make it more difficult for seniors to respond because they can't now go to the chronic areas, and I'd say in my own area the universality of what's available. You have a veterans' facility in London, you have one here in Sunnybrook in Toronto and your government is breaching an agreement that it has made with the Perley veterans' health centre.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): That's not what the court says. Read the court cases.

Mr Patten: The Minister of Health says no, he hasn't, and we will get back to it. They want to honour that agreement. There will be less service. It will not be comparable to what it is now, to the other two institutions that happen to be in Toronto and happen to be in London but not in the Ottawa-Carleton and eastern Ontario area. Shame on you. When you talk about dignity, consult with some of the seniors and when you say you recognize them and you want to thank them for what they've done, remember we have a responsibility to exercise more than words.

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I wish to respond to the Premier's statement today where he announces that the government intends to introduce legislation to reduce the number of members of the Legislature. First of all, let me say I am not opposed to redistribution. Redistribution based upon demographic changes may from time to time be in order. I am also in favour of examining ways of making democracy more efficient. I believe we need to recognize that what is being introduced here today is a fundamental change in democracy for Ontario, and when you're going to make fundamental changes in democracy in Ontario, the people deserve an opportunity to be heard. They deserve an opportunity to have public hearings so that people in different parts of this province may come to understand what the particular impacts are.

1400

It's very interesting that the Premier's own spokesperson told the press on Thursday, September 26, "We haven't studied the specific impacts of redistribution." That was an admission from the Premier's chief press spokesperson.

People need to know what some of the potential impacts are: 23 constituencies in rural Ontario will be eliminated; 33% of the constituencies in northern Ontario, a full third, will be eliminated if the government proceeds. I believe that when you're going to make these kinds of fundamental changes in democracy, the people who are going to be disfranchised or potentially may be disfranchised deserve a chance to express their views in public hearings.

It is interesting to note that whenever in the past, going back to the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and even into the 1980s, there has been such a fundamental change in the exercise of democracy, whatever the government of the day, public hearings were always held so that people across the province could be fully informed. I say to this government, why are you afraid of the public? What do you have to fear from the public? Why won't you hold public hearings with an independent commission?

The second issue I want to raise is this: The Premier says that this will save money. He tries to allude to that. We've had Conservative spokespersons in the media over the last two days admitting that this will not save any money. They admit that at most you might be talking about \$1 million here. The other interesting plank is that the chief electoral officer appeared before the committee and said the other day that if the government proceeds with its referenda piece, the referenda plank which is part of this, the minimum cost is \$23 million per referendum. To say this is a cost-saving measure is utter and total baloney. This is simply Mike Harris trying to appeal to the Reform Party elements in Ontario.

I say finally to the Premier, who says that everything is on line and that he is fulfilling all the promises, re-read the Common Sense Revolution. The Common Sense Revolution said you were not going to cut health care. We have seen \$1.3 billion taken out of health care — we saw a very vivid illustration of it yesterday with respect to Sudbury; and \$1.6 billion is being taken out of education, and the government said it wasn't going to cut education. We see in the Toronto papers today that literally thousands of cases are going to be lost out of the criminal court system, but it said law enforcement and justice wouldn't be cut, and we see seniors being cut.

Health care is being cut, education is being cut, seniors are being cut, children are being cut; the only promise this government is fulfilling is to redistribute income to its wealthy friends.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I have a question for the Premier today. I would like to give the Premier a legitimate opportunity to clarify a very important issue that I'm sure many people, including many Conservative supporters, are wondering about. We're all aware of this government's singleminded approach to cutting government spending, but I ask the Premier in very simple, straightforward terms: Do you accept that government has a responsibility to consider more than just the bottom line, that decisions have to be based not just on fiscal considerations but must also take into account the human impact? Premier, do you agree that governments must be responsible for taking care of people as well as finances?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I appreciate the opportunity to engage with the member on both the philosophical and the very real reason why we were elected. We went into office, all of us on this side of the House, to help people get jobs, help them get meaningful

employment, give them first-class health care, which is why we're now spending \$300 million more than the previous government on providing first-class health care services, why in education we're prepared today and in the future to spend more than virtually any other jurisdiction in the world to ensure that we have a world-class, first-rate education system.

While we embark upon making some changes, we do so confident that we have the best teachers in the world right here in Ontario. But we have some problems in the bureaucracy and a number of people not in the classroom, so we deal with those. Everything we do is aimed at: "How do we help people? How do we balance the books so children will be free of that burden of debt in the future?" So certainly everything we do as a government is aimed at the very real human dimension of people who live in this great province.

Mr Cordiano: I'm sure everyone is relieved to hear that you care so much about improving people's lives. That's why I'm sure you have solid data to back up your decisions on something as important as health care. Surely you have the figures to reassure people that you have studied all the contingencies when you close a hospital, or two thirds of a community's hospitals, like in Sudbury this week. Surely planners in the Ministry of Health, working with your health services restructuring commission, have done detailed studies on the impact of hospital closures. You insist that services will be provided elsewhere in the system. Let's see the data to back that up. Are you prepared to share with the people of Ontario your health ministry's estimates on how many deaths and permanent disabilities you're expecting from the closings?

Hon Mr Harris: I know the Minister of Health will have that information.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The question is full of fearmongering. I would ask the member to check with his Liberal colleagues in New Brunswick. Why don't you check with your Liberal colleagues in New Brunswick or in Newfoundland or other provinces where three or four years ago they did the restructuring we're now going through? There is no evidence of the type of fearmongering the honourable member has mentioned.

Let's do Winnipeg, which is another Conservative jurisdiction: Access to angioplasties, cataract and knee replacement surgery increased as much as 33% when they consolidated and amalgamated a number of hospitals. The report from a group of academics at the University of Manitoba found that no decrease in access occurred for any demographic group for any service, and no decrease occurred in quality of care. "There is no evidence that downsizing has negatively influenced the quality of care delivered to patients."

Every province can point to better accessibility and greater quality when the restructuring is done right. That is the aim of this restructuring exercise, and I know the commission has that as their goal, first and foremost.

Mr Cordiano: I cannot believe that the Premier shirks his responsibility. People in this province want to know from you, Premier, that you're going to reassure them that health care will be provided in all the communities

across this province that feel vulnerable by your actions to close down hospitals. This evasiveness tells me one of two things: Either you're hiding the impact studies — obviously, from the answer we got from your minister, you don't have impact studies. You have no data to back up what you're saying; you have none.

1410

Everyone knows that in a serious medical emergency, you only have so many minutes to get to a hospital. That's a serious problem for a heart attack victim who suddenly has to drive an extra 20 miles; it's a serious problem for someone who's suffered trauma in an accident; and it's surely a very real problem for parents who, in the middle of the night, have to rush their babies who are turning blue, suffocating — real people, Premier, not just debits on a balance sheet. Real people with real concerns.

Have you even bothered to assess any of this? You haven't, obviously, from your answer that you just gave me. Why don't you show the people of this province any of the data that you have, any of the studies that you've done? People are truly concerned about this. You're talking about real lives being at stake.

Hon Mr Wilson: The commission itself, when it's made its announcements to date, has provided a full range of data. They have been very transparent in terms of the availability of information so that people can access whether the right decisions are being taken. The fact of the matter is these are experts in health care. They're backed up with dollars from the Ministry of Health so that they can provide and do all the assessments that are necessary in impact analysis. The highest authority in Canada, in my opinion — and I think your health critic would agree — is Dr David Naylor in the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, and he is the head of the research and analysis department of the commission.

So the commission is in very good hands. They have world-leading experts on this, and we have the experience of every other jurisdiction in Canada and of many other countries. Because we're so far behind in our restructuring, we have the advantage of learning from mistakes made in other jurisdictions, and we have the advantage that the highest expertise that's available in Canada happens to be located in our universities and research institutions. They're backing up the commission and I have their full confidence. I have full confidence in their ability to assess the data and to provide the answers that the honourable member requires.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't want to take up the time of question period, but I would ask your assistance to ensure that there is some consistency in this House with regard to the redirection of supplementaries. It has been long known in this House to members of the minority that this cannot be done, and in the last year this has been done repeatedly by the government. I ask you to review this matter and report to the members of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): One moment, please. On that point of order, for the member for Algoma, we

will review the matter and report to the House. The member for Lawrence.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I cannot believe the callousness with which the minister has answered that question. I cannot believe that you would close down hospitals without having done any impact studies in this province — not the experiences of other provinces but in this province. People right across this province want to know what the impacts are.

EDUCATION FINANCING

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I want to go on to a second question, and it's of a similar nature. Again I want to go to the Premier on this question, and it's a straightforward question.

We're all aware that you're slashing more than \$1 billion in education. Will you tell us what impact studies have revealed with respect to these cuts and the impacts they're having on students?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): The Minister of Education and Training is not here today. He'd be delighted to answer in more detail and with specifics, but let me assure you of a couple of things.

Number one, we made a commitment to the people of the province of Ontario that while we felt there were savings to be had in administration, in the non-classroom spending in education, and that we intended to seek those savings — and we said so in the Common Sense Revolution and we detailed several hundreds of millions of dollars that we felt should go towards balancing the books — we made a couple of commitments. Number one was that we would still be funding in excess of the rest of the provinces in Canada. Number two was that we were very confident this level of funding, properly administered, not only wouldn't impact on the current classroom situation but in fact can, we feel, enhance classroom education.

So, yes, we have transitions to make. We have too many trustees; we have too many bureaucracies; we have too many teachers who are marvellous, excellent teachers who are not in the classroom teaching. Our commitment to make this transition is that we will protect classroom education.

Now, the member will know — and I'm sure by way of supplementary he may have examples — of the odd school board around the province that is not living up to that commitment. If that is so, we're very interested in that because we're not happy if the classroom is being impacted by actions of some of our partners. If it continues, we'll have to act.

Mr Cordiano: The Premier wants to blame everyone else. Pretty soon, he's going to start blaming my children, who are just going into school, for the fact that their classrooms are getting bigger in size. I think the Premier ought to stop answering these questions with all the business jargon and at least provide some of the real data we're asking for. We want to know what the impact of these cuts will be on classroom sizes, on the dropout rate, on province-wide test scores, on virtually every aspect of our school system. The people of Ontario have a real right to know what the human impact will be, not just the fiscal impact on your bottom line. If you have the

information, why has it not been released? If you don't have the information, how can you justify your cuts?

Hon Mr Harris: It's interesting that you raise the issue of classroom testing and being able to measure, because it wasn't until the NDP government came along that we actually, through the member for Windsor-Riverside, started to get down to try to test and find out what our kids are learning and what is there. Your government threw millions more into the system without ever knowing. We applauded the initiative of the NDP at the time and we are carrying on. We are prepared to go with those results, as are the teachers and those in the system. We want to measure the real results, which are the important ones. Are our kids learning and how much, and will they be prepared for the next century?

Quite frankly, we are very confident. Yes, we reduced funding to the operating budgets of school boards in this province by about 1.8% last year. We are cutting ourselves about 30%. We have asked others to take reductions. Mr Sweeney, your former Liberal minister, says 47% — I think that was Sweeney's study — of the \$14 billion spent on education does not go into the classroom. According to the former Liberal minister, we have 47% of the money to target without affecting the classroom. Our goal, though, is to affect the classroom positively — better teaching, better class sizes, better responses in the classroom, better education for our children. Can we do it? Of course we can.

Mr Cordiano: I can't believe the Premier doesn't even know the facts. You've cut 9%; that's the impact you're having on kids in the classroom. They're being hurt by you and you simply don't care what happens to them. I cannot believe this and I'm not surprised to hear that kind of answer from the Premier, who's willing to give the green light to building jails but is going to give a red light to building schools. That's a real problem in this province.

Let's try something a little more specific: special education, obviously a critical program and one that often makes a huge difference in the lives of students who need it. By extension, it makes a huge difference in the lives of the rest of us by giving those students the extra attention they need to thrive later on in life. What is the impact on special education? Do you know, do you care or is it the bottom line that you're only concerned about in that government? Does anybody over there concern themselves with anything but the bottom line?

Hon Mr Harris: As I indicated earlier to this member, our bottom line is about children, about humans, about the human costs, about working conditions, about people in this province. That is our entire bottom line. To give you the exact figure, we reduced operating budgets by 1.8% last year. Are we concerned that some school boards hiked taxes up to 2%? Yes, we are. We think that was irresponsible. Are we concerned that some school boards suggested that adapting to this amount of reduction you can't look at the number of trustees, you can't look at the bureaucracy, you can't look at the 47% of the money that's not going into the classrooms? You won't believe this, but some have suggested that this will actually affect the classroom. Not while I'm Premier. Not while we're in the government. We are going to protect classroom education no matter what it takes.

1420

WORKFARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is to the Premier. A year ago today, your government slashed social assistance payments to the neediest people in Ontario by 21.6%, with the money going into your tax break for your wealthy friends. The only hope you offered most vulnerable people was to haggle for dented cans of tuna or to hang on, because you said the Common Sense Revolution promises workfare. You promised in the Common Sense Revolution to invest \$500 million in a new, innovative program. A year later, your promises are in shreds. You haven't been able to place a single welfare recipient into workfare. There are all kinds of people out there who need training, who need education and who need child care to get back into the workforce, but you've cut training, you've cut education and now you're cutting child care. The best the Minister of Community and Social Services can come up with is that you won't get into numerical targets.

Will you admit now that your workfare plan is simply not real, that your workfare plan is not meeting any of the promises you made, that you are well beyond the target, that you are well behind the dates you set? Will you admit that what you told Ontarians about workfare is simply not true?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I know the minister of Community and Social Services would be delighted to respond to the question.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I appreciate the honourable member's concern about the workfare programs we have in Ontario, given the fact that you have taken such a strong position against workfare and against giving people opportunities to get back into the job force. There are two things I'd like to draw to the attention of the honourable member. There's a quote that was made some time ago which says, "If there's one thing that just about everyone agrees with, it's that Ontario's welfare system isn't working" — the Honourable Tony Silipo, NDP Minister of Community and Social Services. What about the comment from former Premier Mr Rae, who also said, "Paying people to stay at home is not smart"? This government knows that's not smart, and that's why we've put workfare into place. We're phasing it in across this province so that people will have the opportunity to get off social assistance, because that's what they want to do. Finally, we did not cut child care.

Mr Hampton: We know that people on social assistance need training, education and assistance with child care if they're going to get back into the workforce. We suspected that the government was never serious about providing the training, education or child care that is needed, and we're simply having that confirmed every day now as the dates when people were going to get real help to get jobs slide further and further.

There are laws in Ontario guaranteeing working conditions for people in the province. The Employment Standards Act is known as the bill of rights for working people in Ontario. We know that your Minister of Labour, through Bill 49, is trying to roll back those

standards for the benefit of bad bosses all over the province. But I've got a copy here of a regulation that was filed August 16 that says the Employment Standards Act simply doesn't apply to anyone who takes part in the workfare program. If somebody is assigned to a workfare bad boss who makes them work 16 hours a day, you've stripped away the protection for those people. Those people have nothing they can do. You've taken away their rights.

Will you please explain to me and to people across Ontario why someone who's on social assistance who goes to work through workfare gets no protection, why you're going to allow them to be abused by bad bosses? Can you explain why you favour that?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I would like to give the honourable member across the way an answer in three parts, I suppose. I'd like to start by mentioning another quote about welfare reform:

"We need to create a social assistance system that enables people and helps people help themselves, that helps people get training, that helps them get job skills, that helps them get back into the labour market" — Mr Hampton, NDP leadership convention. I have great difficulty understanding why he now opposes plans of this government to help get people back into the workforce.

Vis-à-vis child care, I can understand that perhaps they have some difficulty with numbers, when you look at their deficit targets and how they achieved them, but we're spending more in this province on child care, \$600 million more than any government has spent on child care, because we recognize and know that child care is an important support to get and keep people in the workforce.

Finally, we have not stripped welfare recipients who will be participating in workfare from protection, and to suggest otherwise is very irresponsible.

Mr Hampton: I guess I'll have to quote from the regulation: "A participant in a program established under" workfare, and I add "workfare" here because it's referred to by number, is simply not covered by the Employment Standards Act.

Let me go a step further. We have in Ontario as well the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and it protects workers in terms of their health and safety in the workplace. So where you have a workplace with more than 20 workers or any construction project with more than 50 workers, you have to have a workplace joint health and safety committee to ensure that these issues, health and safety, are protected. But this government's workfare regulations also include an exemption from the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Under workfare, welfare recipients simply don't count. I guess maybe the government doesn't consider people on welfare human beings worthy of protection in terms of health and safety.

Beyond that, while some workfare recipients will probably qualify for some protection under the Workers' Compensation Act, others likely will not, especially if they work for local community groups.

Let me ask the minister, how do you justify taking even occupational health and safety protection away from people on workfare? Don't they deserve the basic human protections in terms of their life and safety in the workplace?

Hon Mrs Ecker: All I can say and repeat again is that those individuals on social assistance who need protection have that protection. We have not taken it away and we will ensure that those who are on Ontario Works programs will have that protection.

Mr Hampton: Everyone will have a chance to look at the regulations following question period, and we'll see why the minister tried so hard to avoid an answer.

1430

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have a question for the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health keeps saying, and he said here yesterday, that he will save \$1.3 billion from hospital cuts. That is the amount that has been cut from the hospital budgets across the province. That \$1.3 billion represents an 18% reduction in hospital funding. In Thunder Bay, his restructuring commission will cut 38% out of hospital budgets. In Sudbury, we found yesterday, it will cut 25% out of health care in Sudbury.

I ask the minister again, since you're making these drastic, draconian cuts to people's health care in Thunder Bay and in Sudbury, will you commit to reinvesting this money in community health care services so that people will not be forced to do without the services in Thunder Bay and in Sudbury? Will you make that commitment to reinvest?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The first major announcement, in fact the largest reinvestment of health care dollars in the history of Ontario, was made by this government in community based services, \$170 million long before we've seen one penny of hospital restructuring money. So the answer to your question is very clearly yes. Long before we saw the hospital restructuring money, we've investing money in community services.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): It hasn't happened.

Hon Mr Wilson: Yes, it has happened.

Mr Hampton: I'll take that as a commitment from the minister that he's prepared to put all the money that he's taking out of Sudbury back into Sudbury in the form of community services and all the money that he's taking out of Thunder Bay back into Thunder Bay in the form of community services.

I want to follow up, because something else that was very interesting happened yesterday. The commission, which is closing two hospitals in Sudbury, said the only hospital that will remain open should have some money invested in it in the way of reconfiguration and construction. It said that \$68 million should be reinvested so that the one hospital that remains open in the community will be able to provide some services. But under your formula, half of the money for that reconfiguration and construction will have to come from the community. In other words, not only are you going to take \$42 million out a year in health care, you're going to demand that people in Sudbury find \$34 million out of their pockets to make up for the crater that you're creating.

If you take the number of households in Sudbury and you do a little division, the minister is asking people in

Sudbury to pay \$562 per household. If I figure out the tax cut in Sudbury that the Premier talks about, it works out to \$176. You're asking people in Sudbury to find another \$400. You're imposing a \$400 tax on them. In Thunder Bay, if you do the same calculation, it works out to \$1,000 per household that you are saying people have to pay.

I wonder if the Minister of Health can say where the fairness is here. You've cut their health care services and now you're going to impose a tax on them if they want to have a hospital service in the community that makes sense, \$1,000 per household in Thunder Bay and over \$500 per household in Sudbury. How do you justify this new tax on those residents in order that they can have one hospital that hopefully makes sense?

Hon Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker, where do you begin? The honourable member has answered his own question. He says we're taking \$41 million, or 25%, out of Sudbury, and he wants all that reinvested in community-based care. Then he also mentions that the total tally that the commission wants invested in Sudbury is over \$70 million. So I hope this answers your question of today and yesterday: We will be taking money from other parts of the province, putting more money in Sudbury than we'll be getting out of Sudbury for many, many years in terms of savings. That should answer your question.

It defies logic. In fact, if you use this logic that opposition parties seem to have made up, Windsor today would owe us money because there's no way in Windsor we've seen \$48 million that we gave them last year.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): What a misstatement of fact. It's the difference between one-time capital costs and ongoing operating budgets.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Order. Order, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: We've not seen any savings in Windsor, other than maybe a few small percentage points.

In order to do restructuring, you've got to do the investments up front. That's what the commission is saying and that's what the government is trying to respond to. During this 30-day period, part of the response from the Ministry of Health will be whether we can afford the pricetag that the commission is recommending.

Restructuring in Sudbury will require a great, huge, upfront investment of millions of dollars, and that money has to be found in the health care system and invested in Sudbury.

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Health can try to confuse the numbers all he wants. The fact is that people in Sudbury know — and the people are on to the Minister of Health — that the minister is going to take \$42 million a year out of operating health care in Sudbury. The people in Thunder Bay know that in terms of the cuts to their health care, 38% of the operating health care budget is going to disappear in Thunder Bay.

Then the Minister of Health says that people in Thunder Bay should pay \$1,000 per household to fix up the remaining hospitals so it will hopefully fill the gap, and that people in Sudbury should pay \$576 per household. How does the minister justify cutting \$42 million a year out of Sudbury, 38% of the hospital budgets out of Thunder Bay on an operating annual basis, and then

come back to people and say: "Oh, by the way, if you do want at least one hospital that works, you're going to have to fork out money out of your own pocket. You're going to have to tax yourselves in order to make sure you've got hospitals that operate"? How does the minister justify that?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member is referring to the normal split of capital dollars. When a community undergoes restructuring and the commission says, "We need \$68 million for capital," that is the commission's orders to the government to come up with \$68 million in capital.

We're not without experience here. We know in other jurisdictions that when communities are asked to undergo restructuring, it's difficult to do the fund-raising locally. In fact, communities throw up their arms and say, "Your commission's imposing this; you come up with the money." We understand that.

For you to take the figure that the commission is asking the government — that is, all the taxpayers of Ontario — to come up with and then divide that over the households really shows a complete lack of understanding of the restructuring that's gone on in Canada. I'd ask your researchers to talk to your NDP colleagues in British Columbia or in other provinces where you might have some friends and really get up to speed on modernizing the health care system, stop defending huge administrations, waste, duplication, and help us to drive all those dollars down to front-line services. A little cooperation would be appreciated.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): It's nice to see that the Premier is in the House today. I certainly hope he enjoyed his \$250 banquet in Sudbury on Friday. Certainly, we invite him to come back to Sudbury, because the first course of the banquet would be Mike Harris's head on a platter. That's the way the people of Sudbury are thinking.

I'm going to do the Premier a favour: I'm going to direct my question to the Minister of Health, because I know he would direct it anyway.

Minister, yesterday you stood in this Legislature and defended the decision of the big blue Tory bulldozer called the Health Services Restructuring Commission to implement the three Rs of health services for northeastern Ontario — that's restructure, reduce and remove health care in Sudbury and northeastern Ontario.

1440

But, Minister, your government is consistent. Today the Premier has announced that he'll do the same thing. With redistribution, the north will get restructuring, reduction and removal of political representation for northern Ontario. So forget the voice for the north. The new Conservative jingle for northern Ontario is, "No meds, no beds, no MPPs." Besides cutting services and besides breaking promises to those people in Sudbury and northeastern Ontario, the one thing we can say is that you're at least consistent.

Minister, now that you agree with the decision of the Health Services Restructuring Commission to close the Sudbury General Hospital, to close the Sudbury Memorial Hospital —

The Speaker: Would the member ask the question, please.

Mr Bartolucci: — how can you justify a system that had 751 beds going down to a system that includes chronic care beds, acute care beds, rehab beds and mental health beds to a tune of only 496? How can you justify Sudbury as being the northeastern referral centre with only 496 beds?

Hon Mr Wilson: I would refer the honourable member to the commission's interim report, where all of the answers are contained. I would also correct the honourable member. For him to twist what I have said — what I have said very clearly is that there is a 30-day period here. He is to bring his concerns to the commission's attention. You can ask for another briefing. They went over all of that with you yesterday; they'll go over all the rest. They're quite prepared, as I understand it and as I've seen in their public announcements and in their briefings, to justify every decision they are taking.

Mr Bartolucci: I'm not worried about the commission. They've rendered their decision. I'm worried about you and I want your opinion and I want your direction, because you are the Minister of Health. The Tories' big bulldozer, the blue bulldozer that wreaked havoc on health care services in northern Ontario, is creating chaos. It hurts doctor recruitment. It hurts health care workers; they lose jobs. It hurts families. It hurts children. It hurts patient care in northeastern Ontario. It hurts the regional economy.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Bartolucci: It strips Sudbury and the region of much of its economic base. But more importantly, it reduces the number of operating rooms from 20 down to 12. In Sudbury —

The Speaker: Would you get to the question, please.

Mr Bartolucci: — we already have physicians and surgeons waiting for operating time. We have plastic surgeons who can't get operating time. We have gynaecologists who can't complete their cases.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Under the Savings and Restructuring Act, section 6.7, you have the power to overturn the commission's recommendations. Minister, will you reverse the decision of the commission regarding the closure of the Sudbury General Hospital and the Sudbury Memorial Hospital?

Hon Mr Wilson: It's amazing how the honourable member, who most of the time doesn't even like me, now wants me to make all kinds of opinions.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Wilson: I'm still waiting for the dog you were going to send, for goodness' sake.

With respect to the details that the honourable member has asked, and those are very real concerns that people do ask, the commission is very prepared to answer those.

Again, where we've seen restructuring, and we take Winnipeg as one of the best examples, an amalgamation of several hospitals, surgeries went up by 33%. There is a way, when done properly, to restructure and increase your front-line services. And the commission, that is the eye that they have for the future, and they will fully answer your question about surgeries and I think you'll feel very good about their answer. This 30-day period is

for you and others, including the ministry, to comment about the interim decisions that have been laid before us. We will, along with yourself, ask these specific questions and we will decide, you will decide, your public will decide, whether we're satisfied with the answers. At the end of the day, the important thing is that we improve quality and access while making the system more efficient.

I don't want to be political, but it's your federal cousins who cut the budget by \$2.1 billion, which is far more than what we're asking hospitals to deal with in the restructuring over the next four years. So I suggest you take some of those questions to Ottawa and also help us —

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Attorney General. Thousands of women and children across this province continue to be hurt by your mismanagement of the changes to the family support plan. There's a woman, a constituent in my riding, who has a small child and who was receiving her payments regularly for two years. As a result of your mishandling the transition period, she has now had to forgo purchasing the bus pass that she needs every month to go to work and to pick up her child from school, she's had to borrow money to pay her rent, and she's even had to go to a food bank to put food on the table.

Minister, you knew this was going to happen. Your own report, your leaked document of January 18, says, "The transition period will see a service reduction to clients for a period of time." You've apologized for this, but frankly that's not good enough. The people of Ontario deserve to know how you, a minister of the crown, could in good conscience, knowing you were going to hurt innocent women and children, go ahead with a plan that was going to damage their ability to provide for their children and live a half-decent life. Minister, how could you knowingly do that to the people of this province?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I have had the opportunity to provide answers to a number of members in the opposition and I have been satisfied that almost every single complaint of a cheque not being received has been resolved. The family support plan is holding no money in reserve or in trust accounts that is not being disbursed.

We have had a litany of problems with the family support plan long before the restructuring began. We have a plan that, when they took over as the government in 1990, had \$300 million owing to women and children. By the time they left office, that amount of money had increased to \$900 million. We are finally taking steps and we are going to provide enforcement tools to the plan to be able to deal with this plan and to allow people to have the confidence in this plan they should have. We are going to correct this plan once and for all. I am determined to do it and I'm not backing off.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): My supplementary is to the minister. First let me say, and let me be very

clear on this, that the woman my colleague is talking about was getting her money before. She is not getting it now. All of the people on the list I gave you were getting their money. They're not getting it.

Your answer was very interesting, because last week I gave you a list of women in Riverdale who did not get their support payments as recommended by the minister responsible for women's issues. You said here today that you took care of those cases. Well, I have news for you: It is true that many of those women received their September cheques, but it was neglected to be mentioned that they still haven't got their August cheques.

1450

Minister, do you remember Ruby White, the woman with cancer whom we talked about last week who had to put over \$400 for drugs on her credit card? It is totally unacceptable and, as I said last week, ridiculous to think you can solve this problem in trying to do it case by case. It's clear it isn't working even for those about whom it said on this list I got back, "These cases are flowing." They are not flowing. When are you going to stop playing politics with the women and children of this province and actually own up to your responsibility and do something about this problem?

Hon Mr Harnick: The member, in all her righteous indignation, sent me four cases from her office that were a problem for her. In the first case support payments are flowing and all moneys have been paid; in the second case support payments are flowing and other enforcement action is in process because of problems at the income source; in the third case that was given to me a support deduction notice was sent to the income source because the income source hasn't been remitting the money; and in the fourth case she didn't provide me with enough information so that we could identify the problem or the case. She might be righteously indignant, but the fact of the matter is that the problems she gave me are solved and the moneys are flowing and the plan is holding no moneys that are owing to her constituents.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would like state my dissatisfaction with the answer to that question and call for a late show.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): That will be handled after question period.

WORKFARE

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Workfare was formally introduced to the people of Ontario in June this year. In announcing this program, Halton was chosen as one of the first-phase test sites. I have recently attended a number of fall fairs in my riding and spoken with constituents who have asked about recent reports that Ontario Works has set targets. Minister, are reports over targets true? If so, will you meet those targets?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I thank my colleague the member for

Halton North for the question. Many communities wanted to participate in the first phase of workfare. We were only able to start in the first phase with 20, and we're very pleased that Halton was part of that.

I appreciate the concern some members may have over the criticism we've had over people thinking that we have somehow set artificial targets. We have not. Our goal is to get as many people off social assistance and back into the workforce as possible. We've certainly talked about the eligible numbers of people on the system who will be participating, but our goal is not to play the numbers game, because we're talking about people's lives here.

What we're trying to do is put programs in place, with the help of our municipal partners, to get these people back into the workforce. Have no doubt about it, despite the criticism from those across the floor who are adamantly opposed to helping people get back into the workforce, we are going ahead with this program; we are doing it, and it's being phased in for full implementation in 1998.

Mr Chudleigh: I thank the minister for the answer to my question. One concept of the Common Sense Revolution was workfare and its promise to create hope and opportunity for the people who have fallen into a cycle of dependency and getting all able-bodied recipients off social assistance and back into the workforce and a productive life, in effect giving people a hand up, not a handout.

Minister, my question to you is, how will the Ontario Works program help get people off social assistance?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We're working very closely with our municipal partners to develop programs that will help people get off social assistance. We are putting in the kinds of programs that will do things they need. We have to respect individuals' needs on this because many people on social assistance have different kinds of needs. We will have community placements where they'll have an opportunity to contribute back into their community for the betterment of the community; there will be job supports, training and job placements.

All the components are part of the workfare plan, and that's what we are doing to get people back in, because I think most people on social assistance want to get back into the workforce. I think it's our obligation to help them do that. As well, it is our obligation to those who are paying for the system to make sure they know the money is being used well to help people get back into the workforce.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question too is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'm astonished at the set-up question from your colleague. Recent reports of surveys done in the municipalities involved indicate that there are going to be about 5,000 postings, in a best-case scenario, one year from now as a result of your wastefare program. It is a program that you've allocated \$120 million to in the first year.

As the business spokesperson on that side of the room, as the group in the caucus that claims to understand how business operates and that you don't set targets and goals and dollar figures around knowing what you're doing, can you justify and explain to this House today how you

rationalize an expenditure of \$120 million in this province without having set goals and targets and knowing how many people you expect to place for the \$120 million that you're spending?

Hon Mrs Ecker: My honourable colleague across the way, I understand, is having some difficulty with this program. First he criticized our government for doing workfare despite the fact that he campaigned on it himself and said he would be supportive of such a program, then he criticized us because we're moving too slowly, then he criticized us for spending too much on workfare programs, then he said that the only decent workfare programs are very expensive to implement and then did arithmetic on our numbers that I think would cause his math teacher to despair.

I keep waiting for their alternative. What are they going to do? What are they offering those people on social assistance who deserve the opportunity to get off? I think \$120 million is worth reinvesting into the lives of people on social assistance. We're going to be spending more than that, sir, to make sure those people get the chance they want, and I would like very much to hear any better alternatives from across the way.

Mr Agostino: We have outlined alternatives, I've sent briefing papers to the former minister and we have told you what some of the alternatives are, and there's one clear solution to the welfare problem that you ignore: job creation and creating jobs so welfare recipients go to work.

You fail to understand that the welfare problem is not a social problem in Ontario; it is a job problem, a result of a lack of jobs. Your own numbers have unveiled that so far wastefare has not created one new opportunity for welfare recipients across Ontario. I'm astonished that you can sit there and justify \$120 million without telling this House and the people of Ontario how many placements, how many individuals who are on welfare will now be working as a result of your program.

Our calculation — you question my math teacher — is based on the 5,000 placements that your own people whom you put out there have told us. That works out to an average of \$27 per hour for a recipient doing volunteer work. You have created the most expensive volunteer program in the world and nothing else.

Minister, again I ask you specifically: Without all the rhetoric, without all the hoopla you've talked about, can you tell this House today how many individuals you expect in the workfare program at the end of the year? If you cannot provide the House with that number, will you commit to scrapping this program and bring some more welfare reform into the province of Ontario?

1500

Hon Mrs Ecker: I believe I heard the honourable member across the way tell me that he would like this Ontario government to go back on the promise we made to the people of Ontario that we would bring in workfare. He asked me to scrap this program. I think that is an outrageous suggestion. I also think that to try and pretend that there has not been job growth in this province is also an attempt to ignore the facts; 150,000 new jobs are in this province. Those are jobs that were not created, did not exist because of an artificial short-term government

program; those are jobs that came about because of economic growth. We believe very firmly on this side of the House that the people on social assistance want to get off and into the workforce. They want those jobs because the best form of social assistance, the best form of social security for those families is a job, and that's what we are working to do.

We had one of the coordinators on workfare from North Bay today report that he has stacks of letters and mail from people saying they want to have workfare people to help them better their community. Algoma's already got people out there working on it. We've got other communities that are criticizing our officials in the ministry because they want to move ahead. They've got plans, they've got placements and they've got people who want to give people a hand up, and that's what this is all about.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a question for the Attorney General, the minister responsible for native affairs in Ontario with regard to the Ipperwash situation. The minister will know that the special investigations unit has made a decision not to pursue its investigation of the beating of Cecil Bernard George on the night of September 6, 1995. Bernard George has been in and out of hospitals since that time for a number of operations. It's significant to note that Cecil Bernard George was charged with assault and has been acquitted of all charges related to those events. Judge Douglas Walker said, "The evidence was consistent with the intention to avoid being struck or run over, not to commit an assault."

A press release, dated July 23, 1996, issued by the SIU stated: "The director concluded that Bernard or Cecil George's injuries were the result of a violent confrontation between George and officers of the OPP. However, the investigation is frustrated by the fact that no one can identify the officers involved." The SIU has taken the position that their investigation is now complete. It's significant that somewhere between 20 and 50 officers apparently know nothing, saw nothing and will say nothing. As a result, the SIU has decided not to carry out any further investigations of criminal liability on the part of officers who may have been involved in the beating of Cecil Bernard George.

Now that you have a new director of the SIU, will the minister commit to asking the new director to review the decision of the SIU not to pursue this very serious issue and to ensure that justice is done for Cecil Bernard George and his family?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): It's important to know that the SIU is an independent body that does not operate at the direction of the Attorney General or the Solicitor General. It is an independent body that makes decisions and reviews cases that are brought before it without any outside pressure. It would be a very dangerous precedent for any political person to become involved in any attempt to direct the SIU into those areas that they feel or someone feels should or should not be investigated.

I understand the frustration of this particular case, but I think we have to look very carefully at the things we do around the SIU and the precedents those actions could perhaps create. In the overall context of the purpose of SIU, why it was created and what it does, it would be very dangerous for any political person to ever be directing the investigation unit.

PETITIONS

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): This is a petition which really shows the impacts of the cut of education transfer payments to my riding, and it's signed by 265 constituents of mine. It reads:

"We, the undersigned concerned parents and citizens of the Kenora area, and particularly the Valley Drive, Amethyst, Cambrian and Minto areas, feel we have no choice but to write this letter on behalf of the safety of our children.

"We have recently been informed that our children aged six and up will be required to walk to school. You say there are no safety risks to our children. We strongly disagree. There are no sidewalks on either North Campbell Street or 11th Avenue North leading to 9th Street North and, for that matter, Cambrian Drive, which poses a safety problem on any given day, especially in the winter.

"There is extensive vehicular traffic using the above-mentioned streets with most of this traffic far exceeding the town's speed limits. There have been problems with gangs, and we feel that suggesting that a small group of six-, seven- or eight-year-olds would be enough to deter a few older bullies or gang members is ludicrous. Safety issues aside, no matter how well dressed a child may be, how can we expect our children to walk in the extreme cold of winter?

"We are the taxpaying public and we insist that you reconsider your decision. Our children have the right to arrive at and return from school safely, and the burden should not be placed on the parents or caregivers who may be responsible for other children and as well may not have the means to escort their school-age children to and from school.

"We, the undersigned, understand about funding cuts etc, but our children's safety must be one of the major considerations in your decision-making process. Your proposal for limited bus service does not allow for the safety that our children deserve."

That's signed by some 265 constituents from the town of Kenora.

ADULT EDUCATION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a petition signed by over 300 people who attend the adult learning centre in my riding. It states:

"We, the undersigned students of the city adult learning centre, submit that we have a fundamental right and responsibility to access adult education. We strongly urge

the Minister of Education and Training to recognize the right to education and to work with us to maintain the unbiased availability of adult education. We urge strongly that the minister recognize the importance of equal funding for adult education."

I affix my signature to this petition.

ROLLERBLADING

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I have with me a petition signed by hundreds of residents of my riding asking that a dusk curfew be established for rollerbladers and a helmet law for these in-line skaters be enforced.

This petition was circulated in the Chatham-Kent area following the tragic death in July of 14-year-old Shannon Bechard. Her mother Jodi and her aunt Pam Hamilton have spearheaded the project, dedicating it to the young girl's memory and calling it Shannon's law. The petition reads:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"In memory of Shannon, we are in favour of a curfew being issued to rollerbladers requiring them to be off the streets by dusk and a helmet law enforced. Too many lives are being taken due to motorists' inability to see the person or persons on rollerblades. The helmet law has been enforced for bicyclists; let's enforce it also for rollerbladers. Help save our children from serious injury or even death."

I have added my signature to this petition.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned business owners in the construction trades, contractors, employees and providers of goods and services, reside or operate businesses in eastern Ontario. We resolve to continue to actively bring forward the issue of fair labour mobility to all eastern Ontario MPPs and, through them, to the Ontario government with the objective of protecting Ontario taxpayer-funded jobs for Ontarians and their families."

I have signed this petition.

1510

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition signed by thousands of workers of the retail-wholesale Canada division of United Steelworkers of America union, the southwestern Ontario regional office, and their petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health

and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to theirs in support of this petition.

PAROLE SYSTEM

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole eligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given rehearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved for a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

I affix my name to the over 260 names here.

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

RENT REGULATION

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition to the Legislature which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario is planning to destroy the present system of rent control;

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative Party made no mention of scrapping rent control during the election campaign of 1995 or in the Common Sense Revolution document;

"Whereas a number of Conservative candidates in ridings with high tenant populations campaigned during the 1995 election on a platform of protecting the current rent control system;

"Whereas the government has consulted with special-interest groups representing landlords and developers while cutting funding to organizations representing the 3.5 million tenants in Ontario;

"Whereas although all renters will suffer, seniors and others on fixed incomes will suffer particular hardship if rent controls are abolished;

"Whereas eliminating rent control will result in skyrocketing rents in Ontario,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to stop the attack on the 3.5 million tenants of this province."

As a member who represents a large number of tenants, I'm proud to affix my signature to this petition.

SALE OF AMMUNITION

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario entitled Scrap the Ammo Bill.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario;

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape;

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals;

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed in only one day, without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain and use their equipment in the safest of conditions;

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

I support this petition and have therefore signed it.

LOTTERY MACHINES

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I'm happy to present this petition on behalf of many people from the riding of Windsor-Sandwich:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to regulate the distribution of lottery machines; and

"Whereas the 6/49 lottery machines are distributed under the rules and regulations outlined under the Ontario Lottery Corp; and

"Whereas small, independent operators are routinely discriminated against by the Ontario Lottery Corp because they lack the power and influence of larger corporations;

"We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to consider revising the rules set out by the Ontario Lottery Corp to provide small, independent operators with the opportunity to obtain 6/49 lottery machines."

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"We demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I add my name to theirs.

FISHING RESTRICTIONS

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I wish to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly, signed by 342 people:

"Whereas we are opposed to the Ministry of Natural Resources slot size of 45-61 cm (18-24 in) on rainbow trout;

"Whereas we do not support the implementation of an extended sanctuary on the Bayfield, Maitland, Nine Mile rivers on all species;

"Whereas we do not support the closing of all species fishing in extended sanctuary policy proposal;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To undergo further public consultation regarding proposed recommendations of the Lake Huron Rainbow Trout Public Advisory Committee;

"To eliminate any restriction to slot sizes on rainbow trout;

"To eliminate any extended sanctuary on the Bayfield, Maitland, Nine Mile rivers and the closing of all species in these rivers and tributaries flowing into Lake Huron."

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition from a large number of people in the St Catharines area that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has closed three out of five hospitals in Thunder Bay and two out of the three hospitals in Sudbury;

"Whereas drastic funding cuts to hospitals across Ontario are intimidating hospital boards, district health councils and local hospital restructuring commissions into considering the closing of local hospitals;

"Whereas hospitals in the Niagara region have provided an outstanding essential service to patients and have been important facilities for medical staff to treat the residents of the Niagara Peninsula and will be required for people in Niagara for years to come;

"Whereas the population of Niagara is on average older than that in most areas of the province;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health to restore adequate funding to hospitals in the Niagara region and guarantee that his government will not close any hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula."

I affix my signature to this petition and hand it to Trevor Nelson, a student from Ferndale public school, who is a page in the Legislative Assembly.

WALLACEBURG POLICE SERVICES BOARD

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I have with me a petition signed by 580 people from the Wallaceburg area of my riding with respect to the Wallaceburg Police Services Board. The petition reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, residents of Wallaceburg, petition the provincial government to reinstate our local members of the Wallaceburg Police Services Board who were removed from representing the people of Wallaceburg.

"We further petition the provincial government to change provincial legislation, giving more budgetary control to municipalities."

1520

USER FEES

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): These are from seniors who are against the prescription user fees of Mike Harris:

"Whereas the government of Mike Harris has broken its pre-election promise not to impose user fees on health care;

"Whereas the user fees imposed by the Harris government on prescription drugs are causing low-income seniors grave hardship;

"Whereas the vast majority of seniors have worked very hard and have paid taxes for decades;

"Whereas seniors are most concerned that this will be the beginning of more and more user fees on health care;

"We, the undersigned, totally oppose the Mike Harris prescription user fees for seniors and petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Mike Harris government place a moratorium on all health care user fees for seniors."

I affix my name to this petition.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr Gilchrist from the standing committee on resources development presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 49, An Act to improve the Employment Standards Act/ Projet de loi 49, Loi visant à améliorer la Loi sur les normes d'emploi.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Shall the report be received and adopted? It is agreed.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? It is agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Mr David Johnson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislature Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Does the minister have a statement?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): Simply to point out again that this will reduce the number of provincial ridings from 130 to 103, the same number of ridings as there are federal ridings in the province of Ontario.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 34(a), the member for Sudbury has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health concerning Sudbury health services restructuring.

Pursuant to standing order 34(a), the member for Riverdale has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Attorney General concerning the family support plan.

These matters will be debated tonight.

OPPOSITION DAY

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs McLeod moved opposition day motion number 1: Whereas the Conservative Party promised voters in the last election through the Common Sense Revolution that "Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut"; and

Whereas the Common Sense Revolution states that "Our obligation to those in need is even greater in the case of our children."; and

Whereas the Harris government's actions have resulted in special services at home funding and other individualized funding to families of people with disabilities to be cut by an average of 30%; and

Whereas many of these families were only receiving 10 to 12 hours of funding support before the Harris cuts; and

Whereas Mike Harris has broken his promise to protect the most vulnerable in our society; and

Whereas many of these individuals and their families have also been affected by the Harris cuts to municipalities which have consequently reduced transportation services such as Wheel-Trans and access to affordable housing; and

Whereas the Harris government broke its promise not to cut aid to seniors and persons with disabilities when it introduced a new user fee on the drugs that persons with disabilities are prescribed by their doctors; and

Whereas many of these children and their families will also be negatively affected by the \$800-million cut to education as school boards eliminate teachers' aides for children with special needs; and

Whereas the cuts to individual families will place increased financial and emotional stress on families that are already under a tremendous amount of stress; and

Whereas people with disabilities who are on welfare or families on welfare with children who have special needs have been unfairly hurt by the treatment they have received from the Harris government; and

Whereas the government has acknowledged publicly that only a small portion of the funds currently allocated for people with disabilities living in those institutions targeted for closure will be reinvested in the community;

Therefore this House calls on the Mike Harris government to admit that their failure to meet the increased need for funding has resulted in reductions to individuals and their families; to do what Mike Harris promised when in opposition and allocate additional funding to people with disabilities and their families; to redress the current funding inequity that exists between disabled individuals who are cared for by their families in their homes and those who are in the care of an institution; and to re-evaluate the priorities and budgets of the various programs that assist people with disabilities and their families to ensure that the services they need are readily available.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I move this motion with a great deal of regret that it should be necessary, given the commitment that the members of this government made when they were campaigning to those with disabilities, the assurance they provided that people with disabilities would not be hurt by the budgetary cuts that this government was about to undertake. I regret that those cuts have taken place and they have hurt the disabled, and it's the intention of this motion and the debate today to draw attention and to force the government to acknowledge that the cuts have taken place and to recognize the impact that they have had on disabled individuals and families who are caring for the disabled.

I recognize that a number of my colleagues wish to address this because it's a concern for all of us in our individual constituencies, so I'm going to attempt to touch just briefly on each of the separate points that we make in our resolution.

The first point addresses our concern with the cuts to the special services at home program. This is an issue that we raised in the Legislature yesterday when we had with us Matthew Dolmage and his father, Jim, who were here to highlight their concern with the cut that had taken place in the special support that their family receives so that Matthew can stay at home in the care of his family, a cut of 50% in the support that family receives. But the Dolmages were also here to draw attention to the fact that 13,000 families across this province who are dependent upon that support of the special services at home program to be able to care for their disabled children have also suffered cuts of anywhere from 30% to 70% and even in some cases have been taken off the support program altogether.

My colleague Mr Gravelle, the MPP for Port Arthur, had wished to participate in the debate and is in committee today. He wanted me to bring forward at least two other cases that have been brought to his attention and mine in our constituencies in Thunder Bay. One was the case of a family who are caring for an autistic child. In the case of this family, they've had their support under this program cut from 780 hours, which was provided to them based on an assessment of their needs in 1991, to 624 hours, and now to 470 hours. This has not been a cut that is related to the assessment of need. The assessment of needs in 1991 provided this family with 780 hours of support care. This is a cut directly related to the limitations of the budget.

Another case from Thunder Bay that my colleague has brought forward is the case of a family that's caring for a child with cerebral palsy. This is a family that over the past three years has received 830 hours per year of service, and that has now been cut to 747 hours, making it extremely difficult for this family to continue to provide the care that their child needs.

The minister, in response to my questions in the House yesterday, indicated there were just not enough dollars in the program to stretch to meet the needs, and while there may be very few responses from the government ministers on which I concur, on that I do concur, because there are not enough dollars in this program to meet the needs and there are constantly emerging new needs for the special services at home program.

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There were 8,000 families receiving special services at home support in 1991; there are now 13,000 families. This is a result of the fact that many programs that were providing full-time care are being closed and families with the option and perhaps the necessity of now providing care for their disabled offspring at home are needing some support to be able to do just that. It's also the result of the simple fact that as new children are born with special needs, they need to be receiving that support. They don't need to be sitting on waiting lists while their parents wonder how they're going to be able to manage

as that child gets a little bit older and his or her needs have to be met.

The minister says that there just aren't enough resources to meet the needs, and that comment I have to take back and relate to what the members of the now government committed themselves to while they were in opposition and when they were campaigning. I have to take it back to the fact that the now Premier of the province recognized when he was leader of the third party, back on December 7, 1994, that the program support for special needs children living at home was inadequate, that in fact he said the program funding should be doubled. That might seem like an onerous commitment to call on the government to keep in these difficult financial times, but in fact the total budget for this program is \$32 million. When the now Premier made his demand of the then government to double the program funding, it was \$26 million and doubling it would have meant taking it to \$52 million. I submit to you that in a program where the need has gone from serving 8,000 individuals and their families to 13,000 individuals and their families, a budget of \$52 million is not too much to ask and should be affordable even in these difficult financial times.

The now Premier certainly thought so when he was campaigning, and I have the written response to this program which he made in campaigning, when he said, and this is in writing in his response to ARCH, the advocacy group for the disabled, in April 1995:

"We believe that the individualized funding model is the best model for future funding arrangements since it promotes individual development and recognizes unique capabilities. At the 1995 pre-budget consultations, the Ontario Association for Community Living asserted that a total budget of \$52 million would meet the groundswell of demand for the current program. They demonstrated the success of the concept of individualized funding through the special services at home program. Individualized funding makes good sense and is economical."

Those words are still true. It makes good sense, it is economical, I say to this budget-driven, bottom-line-driven government, and it needs to be done so that these children can stay at home and receive the care they need at home.

This is an issue of particular concern to us because we are meeting with the families and we know the kinds of stress that these families are under. We have seen the tragedies that can occur when families that are caring for special needs children are driven to the point where they just feel they can cope no longer. I was told yesterday that two families in my own riding who have had their funding cut feel that they simply can't cope any longer and have had to resort to foster care.

The Premier spoke when he was campaigning of the economical sense of increasing funding to this program, and I suggest he was right, because you can't begin to count the cost of putting children who are now cared for at home with some support into full-time care, and we certainly can't begin to count the cost in human terms of those children having to leave their families to be placed into full-time care. It is not happy for the families, it certainly isn't happy for the disabled individuals, and so

we call on the government to keep their commitment to their belief that the funding for this program needs to be increased.

I also want to point out that those who are in full-time care are bearing the brunt of this government's budgetary cuts. The Association for Community Living budgets across this province have been cut repeatedly, and those who are providing the alternative care to families providing care are struggling with the cuts that have been forced on them. I think that if these kinds of cuts continue, the agencies providing care to our children are soon going to be forced to redefine their core business, if I can use the jargon that this government likes to use, and their core business sadly, tragically, is going to be simply custodial care of our most vulnerable children.

I believe that in the last 20 years we have come a lot further than simply providing custodial care, that we have come a long way in encouraging truly independent living in our communities. I can't tell you how sad I am to see in the course of one short year that the clock has been rolled back so far for these people.

The second area of cuts that I want to touch on is the area of municipal cuts, municipal transit budget cuts specifically, which have resulted in cuts to the disabled transit and therefore reduced access to transportation for the disabled.

If there is any doubt about these cuts having taken place, Mr Speaker, I would refer you to a letter that was written by the Minister of Transportation, Mr Palladini, to the Toronto Transit Commission in August 1995 when the cuts were first being made and he says, "While we have talked about a cut of \$6.99 million to conventional transit funding and \$1.18 million to Wheel-Trans, the province's objective is to save \$8.17 million regardless of how it is achieved."

If that isn't a cold-hearted, washing-my-hands-of-responsibility statement in writing, I don't know what it is. The minister's basically saying: "We're going to take the money out and we don't care how you find it. We don't care if the disabled are hurt by this. Just find the money."

But this minister has the sheer temerity to go on in the same paragraph by saying, "We give you the option of protecting the Wheel-Trans program and taking all of your cuts out of conventional transit because, after all, we don't care how you find it," and then he says he's disappointed, very disappointed that they have chosen to take the dollars out of Wheel-Trans and the disabled transit.

That is sheer hypocrisy, absolute and total hypocrisy, not only on the part of the Minister of Transportation but on the part of the government that makes cuts to municipal transit budgets, says, "We don't care where you find it, just find it," doesn't care about the impact and then expresses its disappointment and claims that it didn't really want to hurt the disabled and in fact hasn't hurt the disabled; it was the municipalities that did it.

We've had numerous letters from people who are concerned about the reductions in the Wheel-Trans budget. We have had letters from people who, I guess, have fallen under the category that one of the Toronto councillors described as "throwing the right people off

disabled transit" and find that they're in the category of the people who are being thrown off. That includes at least three people with kidney dialysis who aren't able to get to their dialysis treatments any longer.

We have a letter from St Michael's Hospital expressing concern about how the decisions are made about which people get access to Wheel-Trans so that they can get to their dialysis. We have letters from people who are with the stroke association who say stroke patients are no longer able to access the transportation they need in order to get the care that they need.

Mr Speaker, I submit to you that that is a government cut and it is a government cut which is affecting the disabled.

I again want to just reference what Mike Harris said when he was campaigning about transit and about ensuring that the disabled would have access to transportation, and he again said this in writing in his response to ARCH in April 1995: "...a Mike Harris government would remain committed to funding fully accessible conventional public transportation, community buses, accessible taxis and specialized transit services." How far those words are from the reality of what has happened in the past year.

I am going to be able to touch only momentarily on another area which is of growing and great concern to me and to every member of my caucus and in fact to the families of every child who has special needs in this province, and that is the cuts that have been made to education, the cuts which the government says are 1.8% of their budgets, but which in fact we all know are 9% of the support that the government gives to education, the cuts that the Minister of Education and Training says are just a preliminary to the kinds of cuts that we're going to see this year. If we thought last year's cuts were tough, just wait till we see what's going to happen this year.

But what we saw with last year's cuts is a reduction of services to children with special needs. Again, the government says: "It's not our fault. We wash our hands of this. This has absolutely nothing to do with us. It's the school boards that are doing it. They could have cut somewhere else. They didn't need to cut special education services."

I wish when the minister says that, he would stop using words that mean nothing and get out into classrooms, that he would sit down with school boards who anguish over the kinds of choices they have to make in their budgets, school boards like my own Lakehead Board of Education, which is already well under the administrative cost-per-student target that the minister has set, that has cut administrative costs to the bone and had no choice but to make some reductions in special education funding in their budget this year. It's a school board and it is only one of every board across the province where we're seeing this happen, where we have a grade 8 class of 41 children, impossible in the first place, but a grade 8 class of 41 students with three special needs students in that classroom.

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We have example after example where that is happening across this province. I know that others of my colleagues will address that and we'll continue to bring

those examples forward until this government understands what the impact of their cuts in education is, until they realize that it is having a very direct effect on children with special needs. Because we see that these children, children who are coping with disabilities, are now receiving less support at school, we've seen that they're receiving less support at home, and we are wondering what chance they have.

I've touched for a moment on another direct hit that was made by this government a full year ago. That was when the welfare cuts were made. Again, the disabled were protected in all of the statements made by the government. Well, the disabled weren't protected, not if you were a disabled child being cared for by a family on welfare. Because those welfare families got the full 23% cut in their welfare payments, families that are already under financial stress, families that are already having difficulty finding affordable housing, families in many cases that were stressed just to put food on the table and find clothing for their children and at the same time were coping with the stresses of caring for a disabled child. These same families that had the 23% cut in their welfare payments had the stress of that coping added to them and also have had cuts in their support in special services at home. You wonder where it's going to end as stress after stress is heaped on these families.

The last one I'll touch on is another direct hit, and there's no way the government can wash its hands of this one. They can't find anybody else to blame because it was their decision, and their decision alone, to bring in a \$2 fee for prescription drugs without any thought at all of how that would affect the disabled. So much for the promise not to hurt the disabled. They didn't think about psychiatric patients who may have to spend as much as \$80 a month to have their prescriptions filled and who are more likely to say, "I'm not going to spend that money," because they didn't really want to comply with the prescription and the treatment anyway. They didn't think about that kind of impact.

Mr Speaker, I want to close by suggesting to you that they didn't think about the impact on a constituent of mine who wrote a rather heartfelt letter, and I won't take the time to read it all, a constituent who is coping with a disability, who is managing on a disability allowance, who is struggling to pay the \$2 in prescription fees and who needs regular prescriptions filled for a disability, a constituent who talks about the fact that we live in one of the richest nations in the world and yet there is so much hopelessness about the future for our young and for the seniors who built this nation. This constituent of mine says: "We need to speak out. I didn't ask for this disability. We need your help."

That's the purpose of our motion today. We're speaking out on behalf of constituents like this constituent of mine to get this government to acknowledge that it has broken its promise not to hurt the disabled, that it has broken that promise time and time again, directly and indirectly, to get the government to understand the impact of the cuts it has made and the fact that those cuts are hurting the most vulnerable people in this province.

We don't believe the most vulnerable people in our communities should have to pay for the \$5-billion tax cut

promise that this government made. We are calling on the government to stop the cuts and to stop hurting the disabled and the most vulnerable members of our community.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate?

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): It's a privilege today to be able to take part in this debate. I simply want to outline first of all the litany of broken promises that are the history of this government with respect to people who are disabled and people who are part of the disabled community.

The government trumpets the Common Sense Revolution and the government says the Common Sense Revolution is something that it is implementing and that it is going to fulfil its promises under the Common Sense Revolution. But when it comes to disabled people, the government has literally broken every promise.

For example, the government says it will not cut health care spending, but the government has dramatically cut, and is dramatically cutting, health care spending. Disabled people are among those who will be most affected.

The government said it would not cut with respect to seniors. It said it would not impose user fees with respect to seniors. We've seen now that the government has imposed a special tax on seniors under the Ontario drug benefit plan, and this special tax applies to disabled people as well.

Then, of course, if we go further we have issues like transportation. The fact of the matter is that this government has made drastic cuts to transportation and disabled people have been the people most affected.

I could go on and on and list all the ways this government has broken its promises with respect to people in Ontario who are disabled. Let me summarize, though, what I think is happening. The Harris Conservative government, like its Republican friends in the United States, is literally dividing Ontario and the people of Ontario into two groups. People who are already wealthy and powerful in Ontario are becoming more wealthy and more powerful, thanks to what this Conservative government has done. People who have had to struggle and make sacrifices, like people in the disabled community, are finding that their world is growing tougher by the day. Literally, this government is dividing Ontario in two. It's helping its wealthy friends — they are becoming wealthier and more powerful — and a great many other people are being pushed out and pushed down. That is what is happening to disabled people in Ontario, thanks to this Conservative government.

The government's agenda hits hardest on disabled people, seniors and the poor — people who face systemic barriers in terms of access to jobs, goods and services, and housing. I repeat again the pledge the government made in the Common Sense Revolution. They said: "We will not cut health care.... It's far too important." They said, "Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut." But again, it turns out that was all a shell game, a complete shell game, because health care has been cut and the disabled are being affected by that. Services like transportation have been cut and disabled people are being seriously affected by that. Things like the Ontario

drug benefit plan have suffered cuts and disabled people are suffering seriously from that.

It's a fact that since the Conservatives took power the disabled community in this province has seen supports seriously eroded. Programs have been cut. Laws protecting the disabled have been repealed. Programs assisting the disabled have been eliminated. The Harris Conservatives have taken essential supports away from those who are most vulnerable in our society so that they can reward their wealthy friends with a tax break.

Earlier this year our justice critic, Marion Boyd, urged the Harris government to live up to its promise to initiate an Ontarians with Disabilities Act; that was in May of this year. People with disabilities in Ontario face systemic barriers in access to employment, services, goods, facilities and accommodation. The resolution called on all members to recognize the barriers and to support the call for an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The motion was passed unanimously, but unfortunately it turns out that the government will observe that motion with lip-service only. We have heard nothing from the government since then. The minister responsible for people with disabilities has met once with the Coalition for an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The coalition has been organizing and now has chapters in Toronto, London, Ottawa and Hamilton, but the minister can only see fit to meet with them once.

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There is a social cost involved in excluding disabled people from full participation in our society. Talented individuals who never get a chance to offer their full contribution, talented individuals who have a lot to contribute to our society are simply left out. If the government is concerned about dollar costs, there is a dollar cost for taking programs and funding away from people with disabilities. Look at the costs every time someone with a disability is denied an education or a job and is driven to rely on social assistance.

The Conservatives said, "Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut." In spite of that Conservative election promise, the 21.6% cut in social assistance rates affects people with disabilities because only disabled adults have been spared the cut. Children whose parents receive social assistance and children who are disabled are victims of the 21.6% cut. Disabled children are doing with less food, less clothing and less shelter.

The Ontario drug benefit plan, just to go into detail on that: A \$2 drug user fee is unfair for seniors and people with disabilities. Some 60% of the disabled in Ontario live below the poverty line. They are least able to afford the new drug benefit user fees, yet they are being hit by it. Every week, every month, every time they have to fill a prescription, these people who are least able to afford it, because 60% of them fall below the poverty line, are being hit by this government's actions. Those disabled people are having to choose between paying for their prescription medicine and putting food on the table.

I want to talk about the cuts of 5% from all social service agencies, including those that serve the disabled community. It's true that all social service agencies in this province were cut 5%. Those social service agencies that provide services for the disabled were not exempted.

They were cut and they in turn had to pass that cut on to the disabled clients they serve.

Then there was the elimination of the advisory council on disability issues, the one body in the province that could provide information that could enlighten the government about how its cuts were hurting disabled people, about how the government was breaking its promises to disabled people. The one body in the province that could do that was also sacked by this Conservative government.

Let me get into the details of transportation. The Conservatives cut funding for transportation programs that contribute to the freedom and independence of people with disabilities. In fact, those very transportation programs are quite meaningful in terms of whether disabled people will be able to work. They're quite important in terms of determining if disabled people will be able to get to work. The \$6 million is not a lot of money, yet it seriously affects the lives of thousands of disabled people across the province. The Toronto Transit Commission has translated the cut into almost a total removal of service for the so-called ambulatory disabled, about 40% of the 23,000 registered Wheel-Trans users. These are people who cannot use the regular transit system. These people have become trapped. Many will lose their jobs. This is a direct result of this government's cuts, a direct result of this government's broken promises with respect to disabled people.

Special services at home funding has been cut by an average of 25% to 30%. This is funding that goes to families and individuals to keep individuals and children with severe disabilities in their homes. To elaborate, there are all kinds of families across this province who want to look after a disabled child or a disabled adult in the family at home. They're willing to take on the added responsibility. This government has cut the only assistance that was open to those people, a really terrible act on the part of this government. The Conservatives go on and on about their efforts to move people out of institutions and into communities and back into their homes. Then they go and cut the funding which enables families to look after a disabled individual within the family.

Let's move to housing, to the broken promises with respect to housing. The government raced ahead with its plans to get out of non-profit housing. It cancelled 385 projects. Within these initiatives, there was a \$17-million commitment to fund attendant care services as a part of long-term care. But the services can't be delivered to clients in buildings that haven't been built, so the money sits there. The people who would have received the services need the housing and the services. Where is the money? What is the government doing about all these disabled people who have been pushed down and pushed out by this cut?

Let me move on to disabled children, because I want to elaborate on that. The fact is that many social assistance recipients across the province have disabled children, have children with special needs. Did the government exempt from the social assistance cuts families where there are disabled children? No, perhaps the cruellest cut of all. Disabled children were singled out as victims of this government's 21.6% cut to social assistance.

It goes even further. Some funding for children with disabilities is provided through the Ministry of Health under long-term care. What did the government do there? The government has cut \$33 million from its budget that was supposed to be available to better coordinate the long-term care system so that children with disabilities would be looked after. Again children with disabilities have been singled out by this government.

Then we have the cuts to school boards. What's happened there is this: The Conservatives have said they're not cutting special services, but people in the community are finding out very clearly that special needs educational assistants are being laid off and have been laid off. The Conservatives are downloading decision-making and refusing to enforce standards. What this means in the classroom is that kids with disabilities are not getting the supports they need to participate fully at school. Special needs assistants are crucial for integrating disabled children into the classroom. This helps children with disabilities learn and become full and equal participants in the school and down the road in society. Yet again a broken promise: The Conservative government has cut help for these children as well.

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Let me go further in education. Under the Education Act, section 8, the minister is under statutory obligation to ensure that every child receives an appropriate education. What was appropriate last year is now quite different. Because of the cuts that have been made by this government, the government has in effect changed the rules. Disabled kids are losing out under the Education Act as well — another broken promise.

Let me tell you what is perhaps even more inhumane. When parents who have disabled children in the education system speak up and say to the government, "Your cuts are really hurting my disabled child," do you know what the response of the government is? The response of the government is: "We have no responsibility here. We have no responsibility for these disabled children. Go to court and sue." What an incredible, callous and indifferent attitude to the most vulnerable people in our society.

There is more to come. There are rumours growing louder and stronger every day that the Conservatives are in the process of moving the program that provides benefits to the disabled out of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and into the Ministry of Health. Such a move would have serious implications for clients and advocates in the disabled community. People with disabilities and advocates have fought for years to stay out of the Ministry of Health. People who are blind are not ill. People who have to use a wheelchair to get around are not sick. Not all disabilities are physical disabilities; many are so-called hidden disabilities.

But what is worst of all about this, in terms of literally saying to disabled people, "You are sick; you are not well if you are disabled," is that on top of that, this is a mean and cruel shell game. It is a mean and cruel shell game to prop up the budget of the Ministry of Health at the expense of disabled people. What the Conservative government wants to be able to say is that despite slashing \$1.3 billion from hospitals and despite slashing money from elsewhere in the health care system, by

moving the budget for disabled people into the Ministry of Health, they want to be able to say, "We didn't cut." That is using disabled people in the meanest and cruellest shell game of all. It is manipulation of disabled people to achieve a disgusting political end.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): People will see through it.

Mr Hampton: And people will see through it. We are already getting people sending information to our caucus outlining for us exactly what has happened.

I want to deal just briefly with the definition of "disability." Premier Harris and the Conservatives have said that benefits to the disabled will be protected — that's what they said — yet they have confirmed that they will be changing the definition of disability. Will the government guarantee that no one will be cut off from benefits? No, they won't. It may sound like a simple bureaucratic adjustment, but people fear a change in definition will be a smokescreen for cutting yet more from the benefits of disabled people. Changing the definition is what the disabled community fears most, because it has serious implications for eligibility for benefits. The fear of disabled people of going to a medical definition of disability is that a strictly medical definition ignores the combination of medical, social and economic factors that will oftentimes make someone permanently unemployable and therefore eligible for benefits under the scheme that exists now but would make them ineligible for benefits under the kind of scheme the Conservative government is proposing.

The government will save money with its plans to move people out of institutions and into the community, because it costs less to support individuals in the community than in facilities. That's another part of the government's strategy, but will the government publicly commit to reinvest savings from deinstitutionalization, and when the government deinstitutionalizes, will they at the same time redefine what disabled means and use that process as an opportunity to cut off all kinds of disabled people? That's our fear.

I could go on and talk about rent control. I could say more about transportation. I could say a lot about the elimination of the Advocacy Act. I could say much about the building code changes, which are to the detriment of disabled people. I could say a number of things about all of those cuts that have happened to disabled people, but I don't want to take up too much more time. I know there are other people who want to speak.

I simply want to emphasize that 15% of people in Ontario have disabilities and 10% of people with disabilities are severely disabled, so if the government changes the definition of disability so that only those who are severely disabled receive benefits, 90% of those currently supported will be cut off. About 170,000 people receive disability-based welfare benefits. Is that the government's true agenda, to literally cut off 100,000 disabled people?

As I've said, this government has broken promise after promise after promise with respect to disabled people. This government has hurt disabled people in more ways than it would be possible to recount here this afternoon. At the same time that the government has singled out disabled people, it is giving the wealthiest people in this

province a very lucrative tax cut. At the same time that it is cutting disabled people, this government is going to go out there over the next four years and borrow \$22 billion in order that the wealthiest people in this province can get a tax break.

When you compare what is happening with disabled people as a result of this government's broken promises with the transfer of wealth and power to wealthy people in this province by this government, what is going on here is nothing less than disgusting. It is nothing less than disgusting and people across Ontario, when they contrast these two pictures, what is happening to the disabled on the one hand and what is happening to the wealthiest people in the province on the other hand, are starting to figure out now what the true agenda of this Conservative government is: cuts for the poor and the disabled, more wealth and power for the wealthy. That's the real Conservative agenda in this province.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): The only thing, with all due respect to my colleague across the way, that I have seen that is disgusting this afternoon is his attempts to scare those people out there who have disabilities and who are trying very hard to stay in the workforce and take care of their families, and the only thing that this government is singling out is the fiscal mismanagement from the two parties opposite that has put us in the position where we are having to make such difficult choices.

People with disabilities face barriers every day of their lives, and what our government is attempting to do is to help remove some of those barriers.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: There's too much noise in here. I'll not tolerate it. Please bring yourself to order. Thank you.

Hon Mrs Ecker: The opposition says that we are provoking them, but I really feel that for them to pretend that they have the monopoly on caring and compassion and then to say the things that the leader of the third party has said about somehow or other what awful things he thinks are going to happen I think is fearmongering and misinformation.

We want to help remove some of the barriers that those with disabilities are facing every day by improving the delivery of services and programs to meet their needs.

People with disabilities have been calling on governments for some time to make these improvements, but other governments have not been able to do them. They have failed to act despite report after report calling for significant changes in how we can help people with disabilities.

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Ironically, the previous government released a report entitled *A Time for Action*. Unfortunately for people with disabilities, they failed to take action. The report stated, and I quote:

"Some people who are ill or disabled may not be able to work, but they become more involved in community life, if given the opportunity. The system must be prepared to support people who are in need in a way that respects their individual dignity."

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: You have among you a person who used the term: "Don't bait the bear. Don't tease the bear." Today I am the bear. The minister for Durham West.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will repeat, "The system must be prepared to support people who are in need in a way that respects their individual dignity," and that's what we are doing.

The previous government also failed to act on their intentions outlined in the blueprint for social assistance, a report called Turning Point. It stated: "Our goal is straightforward. We want to assist people moving as quickly as possible back to work. We want to provide long-term support to those who are unable to work."

Perhaps we can go back to a further report in 1988, the SARC report released by the Liberal government which recognized that "all disabled people should ultimately be removed from social assistance." Again unfortunately, that government failed to do anything. They simply repeated the need in their red book to remove people with disabilities off the welfare system. They stated, "We will begin our reforms by taking them out of the welfare system and giving them income support."

We believe that actions speak louder than words, and our government is going to keep our Common Sense Revolution commitment to move people with disabilities and seniors off the welfare system. The leader of the third party would love to make that as some sort of threat, but I think we've listened to the community, we've listened to the people in the disabled community, who have told us they don't want to be on the welfare system, who have told us that system is not meeting their needs. That is why we are committed to making a new income support program for them that is better designed to meet their needs and protect their benefits.

Our guaranteed income support is being developed with the input from people in the disabled community. My ministry has consulted with more than 40 groups, including executive directors of agencies that work with people with disabilities, on how a guaranteed support plan or an income support plan might work. That consultation process will continue because we need to hear from them in terms of how we can continue to do this. We believe that the agencies working with people with disabilities can help shape an income support program that truly meets the needs of the disabled. Our government has also protected rates for people with disabilities and seniors. These rates remain the highest of all the provinces, and we will continue to protect their benefits under a new program.

I'd also like to add that there have been a few comments and hoots and hollers from across the way about workfare. One of the things we had said in our campaign commitment, the Common Sense Revolution, was that the workfare program would exempt those with disabilities, and we heard from angry people with disabilities, from angry groups who said: "How dare you exempt us from work. How dare you imply that somehow or other we're not able to contribute, we're not able to be economically independent." That is why we want to make sure that we design a program that will help them to support them in the employment they may wish to have.

We are also trying to provide people with developmental disabilities with the opportunity of having a better quality of life. We are continuing a long-standing government policy from the mid-1970s of moving people out of large institutions. We are moving them back into smaller community settings so that they can be closer to their families and friends.

Over the next four years funding will be redirected from institutions to local community agencies to support people leaving facilities and people with developmental disabilities in the community. Over the next several years we estimate that \$60 million will be redirected annually into communities to serve people with developmental disabilities. People advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities have been calling for this move for some time. The president of the Ontario Association for Community Living, Nancy Stone, recently said: "I can't tell you how important we feel this initiative is. We have all been working so long and so hard to see the day when people who are housed in institutions are welcomed back into the community with dignity."

Even the previous two governments realized the advantages of moving people back into the community. Former NDP Minister of Community and Social Services Tony Silipo stated: "We believe that people with developmental disabilities have fuller, happier lives if they are close to their families and the people they know and are given the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in community life."

Former Liberal Minister of Community and Social Services John Sweeney told the Legislature: "This province must now continue to promote a level of integration and participation of its developmentally handicapped citizens that was never previously considered possible."

We have been successful, this ministry, and I don't claim that this government has been the only one who has started the downsizing of major institutions and facilities in order to move them into the community. It was a move that was started before because it was the right thing to do, and we support it, and we are trying to continue to help and devise individual plans and support. It's been very successful in the past, where we worked to develop individual plans for people to meet their needs and to ensure a smooth transition from institutionalized care to community-based care. No one will be moved back into the community until those appropriate supports are in place.

I think this ministry has had in the past several years the track record to prove that is indeed the case, and we will continue to follow that track record because we think it's important. I've got letters and the comments from those who have individuals in institutions, those who have had their family member placed back into the community, and they support that move. They say the quality of life for that individual is much, much better and it gives them the opportunity to participate in their community in a way that is not possible when they are in a larger institution.

I'd like to address some comments to the special services at home program, which the members opposite have commented on already today. We are supporting

children with disabilities through that program. It helps parents with the cost of raising their child with disabilities, to help them keep that person at home. The program provides funding directly to parents to purchase services for their children. I think that aspect of the program is extremely important for them, because the family members know best which services that individual, that member of their family, needs. They know what will work best for them. What we have attempted to do in that program is to protect that funding, which we have done, so that we can continue to help even more families, which we are doing, with that program. We want to help as many families as we possibly can with those resources. Families may use that funding to purchase services such as parental relief and support and personal development opportunities for themselves.

Cases are reviewed on an annual basis, because they should be, to ensure the available funding is serving the families with highest need, to make sure they are appropriate services. For those who feel the decision that has been made is not appropriate, there is an appeal mechanism, which many individuals have availed themselves of. Many times there has been additional funding available for those people to make sure that those families who wish to care for their children at home take that responsibility, and they take it very seriously, because I've met many of them in my riding. We want to make sure those supports are there for them.

It's also important to note that we've protected funding for the handicapped children's benefit. It's another program that helps low-income families who do have a child who may well be disabled. The program assists families with the extraordinary costs that may be associated with raising a severely handicapped child at home. This program helps people with low and modest incomes and also those on social assistance to care for their child at home.

There's another area that I think we should mention. While the province tries to work closely with not only our municipal partners on many programs in the Ministry of Community and Social Services and work closely with the many agencies in the community that provide services to people, we've also attempted to work closely with Ottawa in this area, in the vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons agreement, to name one area.

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The federal government has said that it wants to be active in helping us support the needs of the disabled. They say they have an obligation to act and to make improvements to help persons with disabilities, and that includes sharing the funding for this very, very important program. The federal government has yet to act. They have yet to show the leadership by working with the provinces to negotiate a future agreement, because this agreement is going to end. When I asked my federal counterpart, Mr Young, what the future of this agreement would be, whether we could count on this share of funding so that we can continue to protect services to the disabled, he was unable to give us that assurance. He hasn't even paid the bills from program commitments they already owe us.

This is a federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement. It funds employment programs for persons with disabilities.

They made a commitment to begin discussions immediately with us. It is now October 1996 when they'll do it, and those negotiations have not been initiated. In other words, the federal government acknowledges its obligation in this area but has yet to take concrete action. I remain very concerned that they are not going to share our concern about the disabled, they are not going to make the priority decisions that have allowed us to protect so many of these programs, and that they are going to cut that funding, which is going to be a serious problem for many, many people in the community and for this government, because we wish to maintain our commitment to the disabled.

We've heard from the disabled community about the need to improve access to services. People with disabilities have told us they often have to go through numerous assessments for services. We want to make it easier for people with disabilities to access the services they need. We will be working with our community partners to improve access to those services. We want to remove any needless overlap and duplication to make sure that money is going to those front-line services, to make sure that money is going to those families, so they can purchase the services they need for a member of their family who is disabled.

Our government recognizes that people with disabilities have special needs to overcome the barriers they often face in their everyday lives. We are working with people with disabilities in communities to improve how we can meet their needs, and we will continue to do so.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is an interesting issue to deal with and one which I'm pleased is before the House this afternoon. I've always taken the view that those of us who are elected to public office, particularly the Legislative Assembly or the Parliament of Canada, are here largely to protect those who are unable to protect themselves. We have to take into account the views and the best interests of all people in our society, but those who are very rich or very privileged or very powerful are much less in need of the intervention and the representation of members of this Legislature than those who are none of the above; in other words, those who are middle- or lower-income people, those who are disadvantaged in one way or another or disabled in one way or another.

I believe that people of all political stripes have a good deal of empathy and sympathy for those who find themselves in a vulnerable position, such as those we are dealing with today when we deal with those who are receiving special services at home from the provincial government.

I've had the opportunity to meet with some parents who have had children who are severely disabled, who have a lot of needs that have to be met. I suppose the easy thing to do with those children, for those parents — easy in one way, difficult in another — would be to allow them to be institutionalized, because they present many, many challenges to those parents and great disruption to their lives. But so many parents feel an obligation and a love for their children and want to ensure that they themselves, as much as possible, provide the services these children require. That's where the government can

assist. That's where we as legislators can intervene on behalf of those who are not powerful and who need a voice in this assembly.

I note that the government will contend that it either has not cut or has cut in a very small way the funding for the services for children at home, often children who are developmentally disabled or physically disabled or both. I have visited the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre on a number of occasions along with my colleagues from the Niagara Peninsula. We have seen children there who could be easily pushed into the background, who could be forgotten, and many in society no doubt dislike having to deal with the reality of children with multiple disabilities. But the parents of those children and the teachers and staff who are at the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre, for instance, know of these problems and know what the solutions can be.

I remember sitting in on an interview of about two, two and a half hours with a young couple, their own marriage strained by the fact that they were dealing with a child with many, many challenges. They were looking for just a few more hours of assistance from the provincial government — this was a couple of years ago now — per week. They were receiving some, and they appreciated that very much and it was both a respite for them and an occasion for them to show that their child could make some progress, even if it was in small steps. I thought on that occasion that most people in Ontario, in excess of 99%, would not begrudge those children those funds. If you look at others in society, there's probably less sympathy out there. We all are compassionate towards those who are disadvantaged in one way or another, but I think if you wanted to pick the people for whom all of us in society have the most sympathy and the most empathy, it would certainly be those who are multiply disabled, both physically and mentally.

That is why I'm concerned when I see that the funding is not there to meet all of those needs. We did not have as many of these children in the past. One reason is that many children years ago died at birth or shortly after birth and many who were born prematurely never did get to live a full life. Today, the miracle of modern medicine and technology and know-how among our medical authorities has allowed many of these children who would have died in years gone by to live, but they will probably always need, certainly in their early years and perhaps in their later years, some form of assistance from the rest of us in society — not from the government; from the rest of us in society. That can be best provided through the government itself.

The respite care is important as well. People think it's important to have the children looked after; it's important to have the programs that will allow them to show some progress within the home. But almost as important for the parents in order that they can sustain this circumstance is to be able to have some respite care so they can come back afresh and anew and deal with the challenges that are met by a multiply disabled child. For that reason, I hope the government will look again at its funding formula and provide those additional hours of respite care and of intervention that will allow these people to keep the children in their homes.

We've seen cuts in other areas, and some of the other speakers have mentioned them, that impact upon these children. One is in the field of transportation. When we see cutbacks, we see that we're going to have less money available to allow the disabled to use public transit systems. We have seen those cuts and various transit commissions have wrestled with the problem of making those cuts as a result of the cut in transfers from the provincial government and money coming from the provincial government.

We have seen associations for community living which have provided services to those who are developmentally disabled, who are mentally challenged individuals, and we've seen cutbacks in the services they can provide. Once again, if I look back at my very early days in this House, one group that I recognized early were people who were developmentally disabled — that's not the terminology which was used in those days; it is today — and my commitment and the commitment, I'm sure, of all members of this House remains to those individuals even today.

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I look at the cuts within the school system. I've heard the minister and I've heard the Premier say that they don't impact upon the classroom, and most people hoped they wouldn't. Unfortunately, they do, because we have had this transfer of children with special challenges into the so-called regular classroom. That means there has been a need for either a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio or, correspondingly, additional assistance provided to the teacher to deal with those who otherwise might be institutionalized or kept out of the regular school stream, to allow those children to be part of a classroom. We're seeing those positions being eliminated because of the funding which is being cut by the Minister of Education to local boards of education. That indeed is unfortunate. It has an impact not only on those children but the other children in the classroom, because the teacher must now spend more time with the child with special needs and the other children don't have that time, whereas before that was not necessarily the circumstance.

The cut to welfare payments to families is another area where there's an impact on those with children with special needs. They are special needs and there are special costs associated with those needs, and I think we must take that into account. The across-the-board cut in welfare payments presents a more difficult challenge, a more onerous challenge, to those who have children who require special services in the home.

Others have quoted what the Premier had to say in opposition. I agreed with Mike Harris in opposition when he made many of these statements, and I have no reason to believe that he was not sincere at that time in making those statements. But it's important to translate those statements into action. It's important to know that the needs are growing, and when the needs are growing, that means the funding for those special needs is growing. If this government embarked upon additional funding to those who are receiving special services at home, I think they would have the support of virtually everybody in this province. There are other areas where, if the government decided to increase its expenditures, there would be

a division in the province, some who would be very critical and some who would be very supportive, but in the area of helping the mentally or physically disabled and challenged individuals, I think we would have a consensus, not only among those of us who sit in this Legislature but among our society as a whole.

While I value what the volunteer does in this area, and it's important that we continue to have volunteers, we know that they alone cannot carry out the responsibilities and provide the services that are necessary. Many of the services provided through this program require people who have special training and special education and, frankly, a special personality to be able to meet the challenges of young people with multiple disabilities.

For that reason, I hope the government will take considerable note of the resolution that has been presented by the leader of the Liberal Party this afternoon and that the government will think again about its funding cutbacks. I recognize that one of the reasons we have them is because the government is insisting upon moving forward with the tax cut, yet I think if you went down any street in our communities and asked the people, "Would you rather have an income tax cut or would you rather have the needs met of children who require special services in the home?" I suggest to you that most people in this province of goodwill would take the option of allowing the government to provide that funding for them and would forgo the tax cut which is of particular benefit to the most wealthy and most powerful in our society.

I thank you for the opportunity to address this issue this afternoon and I hope the resolution will have the beneficial effect of convincing the government that it should rethink its policy and provide the necessary funding for mentally and physically disabled people in our province who are receiving special services within their homes.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I rise to speak in support of this resolution with, quite frankly, a lot of regret that we are dealing with an issue like this, because I have to say that when I look at the record of this government I've had occasions in the past to talk about the sense of betrayal that I think is there among people in the province as we look at what the government promised and what they are doing. I think that when we look at the area of people with disabilities and seniors — but here particularly we're dealing with people with disabilities — we see very clearly an area where the government, Mike Harris and the Tory caucus, said one thing during the election and what they are doing now is completely the opposite. They run around the province proudly proclaiming that they are keeping the promises that they made. And what was the promise that they made to seniors and the disabled? It was that "aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut." It couldn't have been clearer than that.

I listened with some interest earlier on as the Minister for Community and Social Services spoke and tried to defend the actions that her government has taken. I'm sorry, it's not defensible. It just is not defensible. When you look at the list of things, the list of programs that have been cut which in one way or another support people with disabilities, it just flies completely against the

promise and the commitment that Mike Harris made that aid to people with disabilities would not be cut.

We've seen and we've talked about some of these in the past — and I want to touch on just a couple of those — but what we also know is that as bad as the cuts that have been made are, people with disabilities need to also look at what this government is likely to do yet, because we know that on the horizon, in addition to the severity of the different cuts in transportation, in social assistance, in many other areas in terms of serving children and adults with disabilities, looms the redefinition of disabled people, of people with disabilities.

Why should people with disabilities and all of us, for that matter, be concerned about that? Well, it's quite simply for this reason. We know that in the population of Ontario about 17% of people are people with disabilities, but we know that from within that 15% to 17% only a small proportion are what we would categorize as severely disabled. The rest of that 15% to 17% are people with disability but people who obviously have an ability to function in some capacity, either in work or in other ways, with some assistance obviously.

The fear that we have, and the fear that I believe people who are concerned about these issues and, more particularly, concerned about people with disabilities should have, is that in redefining the term "disability," what this government will undoubtedly do is define disability in such a way that it will exclude from that definition thousands of people who now are covered and who now are receiving some level of support.

I say to the minister with responsibility for seniors issues, who's also going to be, I think, having some responsibility for this issue because we know that a number of people with disabilities are seniors, that I hope he remembers in his current capacity some of the criticism that he lodged our way when he was sitting on this side of the House about how these issues ought to be approached. I hope that we will not see him standing up one day in the not-too-distant future defending further cuts to the variety of programs that we have in this province for people with disabilities.

Mr Christopherson: Look what he did to injured workers.

Mr Silipo: My colleague from Hamilton says, "Look what he did to injured workers," and that's my fear, that is exactly my fear, because what we have seen in this government is a constant pattern of saying, "We support this group, we support this program," while at the same time they're proceeding to cut.

I just want to touch on a couple of areas to make that point and to show that, in fact, I'm not just pulling these things out of the air but out of concrete steps that this government has taken.

When the current minister responsible for seniors was critic for the Ministry of Community and Social Services and I was then minister, I remember the criticism that he lodged our way when we were dealing with a program that served children with developmental disabilities, the special services at home program. It has been mentioned here earlier today. We were dealing then not with cuts to the program but with increases which, in the opinion of the member opposite and in the opinion of people out

there, were not sufficient to deal with the needs that were out there.

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So we were increasing the budget and people were saying it wasn't enough of an increase. We agreed that it wasn't enough of an increase. Through a number of steps, we managed to actually put some further dollars into that program, a program which supports children with disabilities, who are able to stay at home with some additional support, and their families are able to help take care of them, with some support offered in the community.

At that time, the then Conservative opposition caucus was crying out that the increase in spending that we had put into the program was not sufficient. Today they are trying to defend a 30% cut in that program. How does that make sense? How does that mesh? How could it be that they could in one year say that the increase in spending was not enough and now they are defending a cut of 30% to that program?

How could we say that their promise to safeguard spending for children with disabilities, to make sure they are not hit with the cuts, means anything when we hear again today the Minister of Community and Social Services reiterate, proudly proclaim, that they have not cut the handicapped children's benefit? That's true. What she forgot to mention — what she chose not to mention, of course — is the situation that many families are in, families with a child who is handicapped, so he or she is receiving the handicapped children's benefit, where the mother or father, in some cases both, because they have to spend so much time helping to take care of this child, are not able to work and therefore have to rely on social assistance. What has happened to those families? They got cut 22%.

I remember having to sit in my constituency office, as many others of us have had to, and listen to single mothers telling me that they were trying to get themselves off welfare, were trying to get themselves into training programs, but that they had to give up on those programs because, as a result of the 22% cut, they had no other way to deal with taking care of their children.

So when this government says it is not cutting funding for people with disabilities, I'm sorry, it just isn't true. It isn't true, not because I say so, but because thousands of families out there, on a day-to-day basis, are having to live with the effects of those cuts.

Add to those that I've mentioned already the hundreds, if not thousands, of people just here in Metropolitan Toronto, adults and seniors and others, people with disabilities, who because of the cuts in the transportation budget, the funding that goes from this government to the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, to the public transit system, now are no longer able to use the Wheel-Trans system. The TTC has been forced into such a rigid selection system that people who are clearly disabled no longer meet the criteria. That is happening as we speak. That is happening every day. That's the reality out there.

We can continue to listen to speech after speech from the government benches, whether from the ministers or the backbenchers, but it doesn't change the reality that's out there. The reality is that what Mike Harris and the Tory caucus are doing is hurting people. It's hurting

people who are among the most needy in this province. It's hurting the people that we should be saying need our support first and most. All for what purpose? So that we can put more money, through the tax cut, into the hands of those Ontarians who are already very well off, thank you very much. That's what's going on.

You can be sitting at 50% in the polls today and be comfortable in what you're doing, but I say to you that people are beginning to realize what is going on. The more they see that in this province under Mike Harris the rich are simply getting richer and the rest of us, particularly in this case people with disabilities, are worse off and will continue to be worse off, the more people see that that is exactly what is happening in Mike Harris's Ontario, then I'm optimistic that people will wake up to what Mike Harris is all about. I think that day will come, but I hope that in the meantime the government members begin to realize that too, because otherwise so many people, in addition to people with disabilities, will have been hurt in the process.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure today to participate in this debate on the opposition day motion. I'd like to focus my remarks on two aspects of the motion, those of education and health care. I will be brief, because I know that several other members in our caucus would also like a chance to speak to this motion.

Ever since our government announced reductions of \$400 million for Ontario school boards in the fiscal year, the opposition has accused our government of breaking our promise to guarantee funding for education. This, however, is not the case, and I want to begin by reminding members of the opposition about our commitment to education in the CSR. The Common Sense Revolution said that classroom funding for education will be guaranteed. That does not mean that savings cannot be found elsewhere in the education system. Too much money is now being spent on consultants, bureaucracy and administration. Not enough is being invested in the classroom. That's what we said in the CSR and I think today we'd all agree that that's still the case, even after recent reductions.

As you can see, we promised to find savings in education and to use the education dollars more effectively. The entire thrust of our commitment to education was to operate a more efficient system so that we can utilize the greatest share of public funds for classroom education. This is presently not the case. According to the report of the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force, 47% of the almost \$14 billion spent on education does not go into the classroom.

The opposition points to our reductions as the reason for the reductions in services for special needs children. It is wrong for them to suggest that we are to blame. Our recent spending reductions only amount to a 1.8% reduction in the school boards' operating budget. The reductions are clearly manageable, and school boards didn't have to lay off teachers or increase property taxes to find these savings.

The concerns raised about the way school boards have handled their reductions are coming not just from our government but from teachers and taxpayers right across the province. For instance, on March 20 of this year a

teacher on the TVO program *The View From Here* said the following about school boards: "When you look at what the Toronto Board of Education at the moment is spending on a yearly basis and look at how much is actually filtering down to kids and how much of it is getting spent at the bureaucratic level on things that don't, in the end, make much difference to how a kid's day goes at school, I think that's wrong, and a lot of us are tired of that sort of bureaucracy." We agree.

In addition, a recent editorial, which appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on September 21, made the following comment on school boards: "It's true we have too many school boards and too many trustees. What we don't have in Ottawa-Carleton are many examples of the 73 trustees at six local school boards moving quickly to save taxpayers money by cooperating and consolidating services." These are the areas where we would like the school boards to focus their attention.

I'm not trying to generalize or say that all school boards act in such a manner, but by far, the vast majority of school boards in this province have done one of the following or a combination thereof: increased property taxes, reduced services or laid off teachers to find these savings. This should not have been the case. The savings could have been found in areas outside the classroom.

Last spring the member for Niagara South, Mr Hudak, and I led an education round table discussion in my area. We did this to discuss how we could find savings in education. The round table group had some unique ideas. They said that savings could be found in areas such as sharing of storage yards between boards or school facilities, especially during the summer, and busing, of course, which everyone has talked of. It also recommended the elimination of a \$700 biannual payment for each teacher to attend a conference or undertake some form of in-service training. The round table also suggested that the practice of local curriculum rewrites may be eliminated or seriously curtailed. There are so many people writing and rewriting curriculum in this province that there are certainly savings to be found there.

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At the same time, it should be pointed out that the government has taken more concrete steps to improve the quality of education in this province since being elected over a year ago than at any other time in the history of this province. Let me talk about some of those.

In response to the Royal Commission on Learning's recommendations, and living up to our commitments in the Common Sense Revolution, the Ministry of Education and Training is proceeding with a comprehensive testing plan to be administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office. Under this plan students in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 will be tested regularly in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Our government has instituted province-wide testing so families will be able to see how well their schools and children are performing compared to others.

We also implemented the College of Teachers, a body which will represent the professional interests of teachers and the public. This body will challenge teachers and enhance their ability to meet children's needs.

I'd like to point out that Lynn Beyak, chair of the Ontario Parent Council, said that mandatory participation

of teachers in career-long learning will result in higher standards for the teaching profession, which can only benefit students in the classroom.

I also have to applaud the Minister of Education for creating the technology improvement partnership program. This program will spend \$40 million on partnerships in technology. The technology will make a difference for our students' employment and competitive future and give all students the opportunity to become computer-literate.

All of these changes are being made to bring accountability to the education sector and to increase the quality of education. We owe this to our students.

Quickly, on health, because I want to save time for other members, in the Common Sense Revolution document the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario that our government would seal the health care envelope at \$17.4 billion for our government's term in office. That commitment not only remains firm; I know that you know that it's actually \$17.7 billion, an increase of \$300 million.

We were very clear that we would change the way we deliver health services in this province, and given the fiscal pressures we are facing, there is some urgency to that task. We are committed to maintaining the spending envelope, but if you are asking our government to maintain the status quo, the same inefficiencies, maintain the duplication in the system, the answer is clearly no. We are prioritizing front-line services, but we stand firm that we are not satisfied with the past and will continue to look for improvements and savings in the health care system.

Even after we reduced spending by \$2 billion last July, this Ontario still faces a deficit of \$8.7 billion. When I say this province faces the deficit, I refer to the whole province, because it's not the government alone that faces this deficit. It is every person living in the province, as well as our future generations of Ontarians.

Much has been made lately about our restructuring of the hospital sector. I think it's absolutely essential that we get on to restructuring that system. We shouldn't be spending our money on bricks and mortar and gas bills and hydro bills, but we should be putting our money into front-line services, increasing the services that people have, increasing the number of people who provide those services by taking the money from the bricks and mortar and putting it back into the service sector.

If we didn't have this huge debt that we have to deal with, if we didn't have to spend over \$8 billion on interest, which is a growing amount until we can get our deficit down to zero, we would be able to continue higher levels of spending in areas like education and health care. Dealing with the legacy that was left us, though, we're going to take the hard steps that we need to take so that we can provide positive education and health services for the future of this province.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join in the debate on the motion dealing with services to persons with disabilities. The Minister of Community and Social Services accused the opposition of attempting to scare people and to say, "We have a deficit situation we have to deal with, and that's why we're doing it."

Well, I think people have a reason to be worried. I don't like the term "scared," but to be worried. We have some representatives in the gallery who play a key role in the area, and I would say they have every reason to be worried. Why? Because this government is only halfway through the cuts it's going to make. There are more cuts to come, and why? Fundamentally because you have to fund a \$5-billion-a-year tax cut.

You say we have a deficit problem we have to deal with. I think Ontario understands that. But what Ontario can't understand is that if the deficit is such a huge problem — by the way, the previous Conservative speaker said, "The reason we're making these cuts, and I'm sorry to have to make those cuts and we would spend more if we didn't have to make these cuts" — the reason you're making the cuts is that the majority of the cuts will go right back out in the form of a tax break. This is straight out of your budget. The tax cut will cost the province of Ontario \$5 billion a year in revenue. If the deficit is such a huge problem and if the disabled community has to do its share to fight the deficit, how can it be that the best-off people in this province, people making \$100,000 a year, are going to get a \$5,000-a-year tax break and the disabled in this province are going to see dramatic cuts in their services?

There's a fundamental inconsistency in the Conservative approach. Frankly, the tax cut is all about driving down support and services for people. That's what it's all about. The previous speaker talked about health care. That's why the community has a reason to be worried. I don't like to say this, but I don't trust the government. You ran on a platform of no copayments, no new user fees on drugs. What did you do? You broke that promise. It was clear-cut, specific, couldn't have been more clear-cut — no copayments, no user fees — and you broke that promise.

Our hospitals in this province are facing chaos right now, and that's the only way to describe it: chaos in Sudbury, chaos in Thunder Bay. I happen to represent a Metropolitan Toronto constituency, and we're about to face chaos. The cuts that you are imposing on the hospitals are driving hospital closures far beyond what anyone thought. In Metropolitan Toronto a study was done by the district health council and now the government has instructed the restructuring commission, "Cut deeper." Why? Why cut deeper? Because you are cutting 18% of the funding support for hospitals.

I will say to the Conservative members, you are forcing chaos on our health care sector, chaos on our hospital sector. In virtually all our communities across the province they see that you are going to cut 18% of the funding for hospitals. They have no choice, and now it is survival of the fittest and they are into a dogfight in every one of our communities across the province.

That is not a way to deal sensibly, logically, rationally with health care. Certainly in Metropolitan Toronto, in Chatham, I suspect, in Thunder Bay, in Sudbury, in all our communities, hospitals are being pitted against each other. Who's going to survive in a significant period of real draconian, drastic cuts in our health spending?

The reason I raise that is because this motion today is attempting to raise the awareness of all of us about what

is taking place in our communities. I think all of us on a daily basis get parents coming to our offices saying: "Previously there were services in certain facilities that are no longer available. I'm looking for community-based support, and it's not there." I think most members in this Legislature support community-based care, allowing parents to keep their young people at home, but the services aren't there.

1700

We have talked today about some of the cutbacks in education. Make no mistake about it: You ran on a platform of not touching the classroom, but I don't think there is a school board in this province that hasn't got significantly larger classes in September 1996 than it had a year ago. Find me a school board that has smaller classes. That's the challenge to the Minister of Education.

If I were a backbencher with the government, I would begin to try to rein in the Minister of Education. He makes statements on a daily basis that cause chaos in the system. One minute he's saying the system is broken — by the way, on almost the same day that the Premier is lauding the system for offshore investors — and then he's saying, "We are going to fund education in a completely different way; we're going to get rid of school boards." I don't think he knows where he's going.

In the meantime, I will challenge you: Find me a school board that has smaller classes in 1996 than it did a year ago. The fact is that it's right in the classroom that the cuts are being felt and the cuts are impacting. The number that was used today, that 47% of the spending takes place outside the classroom, is simply wrong. It is an incorrect number. You are using the wrong number to draw the wrong conclusions. Again, if I were on the back bench, I would raise it with my minister.

The other reason for worry is that I think for the first year the public assumed the government knew what it was doing, knew how to run things. They felt, "They at least can manage the system." Frankly, the wheels are starting to come off. I find it in my community. In the health sector, people are extremely worried. They don't think you are dealing effectively with any of the health sector. In the education sector, if you talk to parents, home and school groups, community groups, teacher groups, they're all saying, "The system is being put into turmoil."

We dealt this week with the family support plan, where literally thousands, mainly women, are not getting payment. By the way, in the public accounts that were released yesterday, the deficit was reduced by \$42 million in 1995-96 because you brought in more revenue than you thought, mainly from fathers, and you put out less revenue than you thought, mainly to the mothers. We see a chaotic situation that you then use to reduce your deficit by \$42 million more than you thought you would.

My point is this: In health care, in education, in the family support area and I think also in our correctional services, whatever is happening there, something isn't being run properly.

The Minister of Transportation is in the House. I know he cares about wheels falling off trucks, but that's been an issue with you since you got elected. Since you became the Minister of Transportation, the wheels keep

coming off. It can't be that difficult. We've got to fix those things.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): There were even more coming off when you were in government.

Mr Phillips: The Minister of Agriculture chirps up as well. In his community, I suspect, the health sector is starting to ask some questions about Noble: "What's going on, Noble? Our doctors don't seem to be very understanding of the situation. Our hospitals in this province are under enormous stress. Our education system's under enormous stress. What's driving it?" It is that you are absolutely dedicated to a tax cut of \$5 billion that is causing chaos in the services in this province, and frankly, it will cause chaos in your caucus eventually, I hope.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to rise today to speak to this motion. I think the disabled people in the province could be forgiven if they were watching this debate this afternoon and wondered whether it was really about their issues or not. It seems to me that although the focus of this resolution is around the needs and rights of disabled people, many who have spoken have gone on to other issues, and many disabled people out there are probably saying, "Why are they talking about all these other things and not about the things that concern me?"

I think the impression that disabled people often have of this place is that they are left out and excluded, not just physically — we already know that they are excluded to a large extent physically from this building — but from our considerations of policy and legislation. What disabled people want is the sense that they will be considered as we bring forward policy, as we bring forward legislation, that each part of those pieces of work that we bring forward will have been tested against how it affects those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

We know that 15% of the people in Ontario have disabilities and that of those, 10% are severely disabled. That means that 90% of those who have disabilities might not be considered disabled if there were a strict definition of severe disability causing inability to be employed. That is of great concern to disabled people. The dearest wish of disabled people is to be independent and self-sufficient. That is what they long for just as anyone else longs for it. The issue for them is that without the policies in place, without the provisions in place to allow them to exercise their talents and abilities, they will constantly be curbed and prevented from contributing to their society what they have to contribute.

At the present time about 170,000 people in this province receive disability-based welfare benefits. Many of those people are ready and willing to take jobs. They want to work, but unless they can get to work they are not able to do so, and most of them are unable to have a reliable transportation system that can accommodate them and get them to work. Those who have mental disabilities often require additional time to complete tasks they have and require job coaching to get themselves familiar enough with that task to be what we call productive

workers. Yet we find that with retraction of grants to the very agencies, like community living associations, that provide those kinds of services for disabled people, they are unable to provide those services, unable to allow those disabled people to contribute as they wish and as they are able to do.

Sixty percent of people with disabilities in Ontario live below the poverty line, and that is under \$15,000 of an annual income for a single person and under \$24,000 for a couple with children. People with disabilities suffer the most extreme levels of unemployment within our community. In 1990, 80% of people with disabilities found themselves unemployed. With the recession and the layoffs that have occurred even within government those figures are worse, because the findings of the Management Board, in looking at the proportion of people who had been hired by government, were not nearly the objectives that had been set, and those who have been laid off, because they were often last in, has been higher. All the way along the line, with the cuts the government is doing, disabled people are suffering disproportionately.

We've heard talk here about the welfare rates and the drop in welfare rates. It is true that for those who have recognized disabilities, where someone in the Ministry of Community and Social Services has finally agreed that they have a disabling condition that prevents them from getting employment, those people's allowances have not been cut. But we also know, every single one of us who's an MPP, that moving from welfare assistance on to family benefits, on to that permanent disabled benefit, has taken a much longer time and continues to become more and more difficult.

1710

We may have stopped in this place by our questions a redefinition of disabled last September, but administratively, in every welfare office in this province, we are seeing that new definition, that stricter definition, applied. People who had been deemed to be disabled, who have clear medical support for their disability, are finding themselves disentitled from disability benefits even though they have been enjoying those for a period of time.

Now we see, adding insult to injury, that disabled people are included in the copay for drugs. I really want to talk about this issue a little, because these are the people whose very lives, in most cases, rely upon the medications they take, yet they are being required to pay a \$2 fee when they need a medication.

Let's look at a person in a wheelchair who has a real difficulty with bodily functions, a real difficulty with infection that is associated with those kinds of problems. Think very seriously about what that means in terms of quality of life. You take that person who has, say, 10 prescriptions a month — and I'm being minimal here, because many people have more than 10 prescriptions a month, but say they have 10 prescriptions a month — and you say, "That's only \$20 a month." Well, that's great, but they're also being faced with higher fees to register for paratransit. In my community, in an effort to try to maintain at least some flexibility in the system, the registration fee had to be increased. In many others, those whose disability may not confine them to a device that

assists them to be mobile may have been disintegrated altogether. Transportation costs, whether they're in the paratransit area or in the regular area, have increased.

If people are fortunate enough to own a home and have become disabled or are disabled when they own that home, they're seeing all the user fees come in place that are required by municipalities in order to make up for the huge, drastic cut in grants that this government has done.

In other words, one after another after another after another, the actions of this government have impacted very severely on those who are on fixed incomes. Most disabled people — not all, but most — are in the situation that they have to live on a fixed income of one sort or another.

One of the realities that is also faced by people who are disabled is the real fear around the redefinition of disability that was promised by the previous minister and has not been denied by the current minister. This is a very insidious issue. Not only are people afraid that they will become deemed to be fully capable and their disability will be ignored in a new definition — that is the fear — but there is also real fear that the definition will not be flexible enough to meet needs. Let me give you the examples that we know of.

There are people who have what we call cyclical disabilities. People who have multiple sclerosis are a good example. People who have AIDS are another good example. People have an exacerbation of their condition for a period of time which makes them unable to work, but then as they begin to recover their strength and are able to work again, they go back to work knowing that another cyclical pattern may repeat itself. One of the real concerns we have around the redefinition of the disabled is that it will not take into account that cyclical effect, that people will have to jump through all the hoops each time they go through a period of time when they cannot work, when they need the support of their community. That is an issue that needs to be taken into account.

Many people are not disabled from birth. They become disabled when they are older. For those people, who have worked, have supported themselves, may have families they support, the blow that comes with finding they have a disabling condition or disease is made that much worse by the way in which they are treated by the system, because when their resources run out and they are forced to rely on the state for assistance, they hear from this government pejorative comments around those who need help.

The members of this government do not distinguish between those who would like to work — I would suggest most people who are on assistance would like to work — and those who in fact have been self-supporting and have lost their ability to be self-supporting through no fault of their own, through accident, through disease, through a growing condition, through a work injury. These are people who find themselves suddenly in a position that they never anticipated, and what do they find? They find themselves castigated by the very government that is supposed to offer them assistance and encouragement.

It is very clear that in a plan, for example, like the Trillium drug plan there is no provision for the sudden-

ness with which disease or injury disables people and makes them unable to earn. In the Trillium drug plan, it is based on the dollars that someone made in the last tax year. Well, let me tell you, there are many disabled people who were earning very fine salaries in the previous tax year who suddenly find themselves with no income at all in this tax year, and yet they cannot qualify for the Trillium drug plan without a huge copayment that comes up front.

When we look at diseases, for example, like AIDS where the drugs are quite costly, if we look at Parkinson's, if we look at multiple sclerosis, again areas where new drugs are coming on stream that are very expensive, these are people who are unable to deal with their conditions and keep themselves as healthy as possible because the system is not flexible enough to support their taking the drugs they need. Those are the kinds of issues we need to deal with.

The reality is, if anyone thinks the cuts in education are not affecting the disabled, you haven't talked to any parents of disabled children. Those non-classroom costs often include the whole process of individual program plans which are a requirement under the Education Act for dealing with students with special needs. Those out-of-classroom costs often include the assessments and the efforts of other groups to help a school adapt to a child with special needs. Those out-of-classroom so-called expenses deal with the supports to the teacher in the classroom.

I'm not as concerned about growing classroom size as I am that growing classroom size will be used as an excuse to segregate disabled children further, pull them and push them away from the mainstream and make it impossible for them to have the real opportunity that they ought to have in their school and in their community.

What we are talking about is a whole list of things that this government has done. It has taken away the protection of the Employment Equity Act, which really gave hope to disabled people that they would be considered for jobs. They have taken away the Advocacy Act, which gave them some hope that if they were in an institution, if they were ill, they would have someone to speak on their behalf if they could not speak on their own. They have taken away the very opportunities that they have in terms of jobs by saying, "Oh, we're going to make a special system because they're unemployable." All of this tells disabled people that there is very little understanding on the part of this government of the real way to make people independent and self-sufficient and to deal with those who are disabled in our community.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I also would like to respond to the questions raised by the opposition leader. She was concerned about reduced transportation services for people with disabilities. Before I begin, let me make one thing very clear: The member was right about one thing. The Common Sense Revolution does promise to protect seniors and people with disabilities. However, she was misinformed about the funding for conventional and specialized transit. In fact, earlier this year, the Ministry of Transportation increased funding for capital projects by \$140 million, for a total of \$390 million. That money will help preserve existing transit facilities and focus on moving people safely and efficiently.

1720

This government also provides funding to municipalities for specialized transit for people with disabilities, and more than that, in our economic statement last fall, we announced that we would maintain that funding at current levels.

Let me make this very clear. While we are looking for efficiencies right across government, we also promised Ontarians that we would focus on the services they value most, and that includes transportation services for people with disabilities. This government believes all Ontarians should be free to travel where they please. We also believe all Ontarians should have access to the transportation services they need to get there.

We are very concerned that the mobility and access needs of the people of Ontario are met. However, it is up to the local municipalities to determine the most cost-effective way to meet those needs, and the province has no direct role in that process. The role of the province is to provide funding. As I already mentioned, we provide 20% to 30% of the operating costs for specialized transit, plus we provide \$3.50 for each passenger trip.

Ontario's guidelines for specialized transit have two criteria to determine who should have access to specialized transit. They include anyone who cannot climb or descend steps on conventional transit and anyone who cannot walk more than 175 metres. Municipalities are free to carry passengers on their transit service that fall outside our criteria, to apply their own criteria that meet their local needs.

Here in Toronto, it is the Toronto Transit Commission that sets the service levels and eligibility guidelines for Wheel-Trans. In January, a TTC advisory committee met with Wheel-Trans staff to develop new eligibility guidelines. Wheel-Trans hired a private firm to interview current passengers to determine who will continue to qualify for service. Municipalities are in the best position to determine the most cost-effective way to provide transit services that meet our customers' needs. The city of Toronto and the TTC are no exception. Given Ontario's fiscal situation, all public services must find ways to reduce waste and improve service. This government encourages transit authorities to streamline their operations.

In Ottawa-Carleton, the local transit authority recently awarded a contract to a new private contractor to provide specialized transit service. The move saved more than \$4 million. That's \$1 million for each year of the four-year contract. As a result, Para Transpo, as it's called, has not had to cut service or increase fares, and furthermore, the service accommodates almost 97% of all passengers who request it.

There are 98 specialized transit systems in the province, and every one of them has a unique approach to providing service. The province encourages all municipalities to find innovative ways to meet their communities' needs. The province supports municipalities that provide specialized transit services. We also support transit safety, and we will continue to support better, more cost-effective transit for all Ontarians.

I also need to mention that the Minister of Transportation, along with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing, announced the launch of the community transportation action program on August 19, 1996, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference. Community transportation includes school transportation, intercity bus services, health and social service agency vehicles, public transit and transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities.

Duplication inefficiencies can be found in some of these services. For example, one Ontario city has nearly 200 accessible vans operating within its boundaries. However, only 20 of these vans are part of a specialized transit fleet. Due to the lack of coordination, the specialized service has been turning down requests where available vehicles go unused. Provincial seed money will be available to support local proposals for improved coordination and restructuring of community transportation services.

Now I'll address the issue of housing assistance to seniors and people with disabilities. Our government knows that housing for people with special needs has a unique place in housing strategies. Supportive housing remains an important part of our efforts in this area, and a number of ministries continue to discuss ways to improve funding for support services. Supportive housing is housing for people who need essential support services to maintain their tenancy and live independently. Supportive housing is generally provided through agreement between the housing provider, a non-profit housing corporation or the Ontario Housing Corp and a support service agency.

On behalf of the government I'd like to emphasize that we intend to protect the existing stock of special needs units and increase the number of units of supportive housing available in this province wherever possible. With that in mind we intend to discuss possible options with non-profit providers, OHC, support service agencies and the ministries that fund the agencies. We're also looking at ways to better coordinate housing and supportive services so that tenants get better service and taxpayers get better value for their money.

As the House knows, our government's position has always been to spend money on people rather than bricks and mortar. Today there are nearly 4,100 units of non-profit supportive housing dedicated to people with developmental, physical or psychiatric disabilities and frail elderly. In addition there are about 3,750 special needs units in non-profit housing with no formal support services. But the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing does provide funding for enhanced housing activities in many instances.

On the other hand, we know that there are a number of special needs tenants who do not require support services to live independent lives: for example, people with physical disabilities who are capable of living independently as long as their housing has been modified to accommodate their disabilities. With particular regard to seniors, there are nearly 15,000 social housing units for seniors. More than 700 of those units are dedicated to frail elderly persons who receive support services enabling them to remain in their community.

Initially, seniors' housing in the Ontario Housing Corp portfolio was intended to serve seniors who were active

and didn't need special support services; nearly 43% of the 84,000 units of public housing were intended for active seniors. Over time, however, they have aged and now a significant number receives support services. In these cases local housing authorities have arrangements with local support service agencies for provision of those services. Generally these arrangements include having support service agency staff onsite around the clock, having homemaker teams assigned to specific buildings where demand for these services is high and providing support services on a regular basis onsite, such as congregate dining and personal care. About 1,300 seniors in OHC housing are receiving support services through such arrangements, in addition to others who live in units covered by rent supplement agreements between OHC and private landlords. Many other seniors arrange to receive community support services on their own like any other member of the community.

In addition to all this, tenant associations of seniors also receive funding support and organizational assistance from the ministry. It needs to be remembered that today Ontario provides the highest level of rent-geared-to-income support of any province in Canada, and our social assistance rates are still 10% higher than the national average. It should be clear that our government understands its responsibility for the wellbeing of vulnerable people in Ontario; that is, it has always kept that responsibility in the forefront and continues to fulfil its commitment.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): In trying to put down some thoughts about this opposition day motion, I wanted to approach it from a very humanistic, very real point of view, as opposed to a political point of view, because I think it's that serious and it deserves that type of attention. I'll start with a little quote from Deborah Kent, who says, "Though people with disabilities have become more vocal in recent years, we still constitute a very small minority, yet the beautiful people, the slender, the fair, the perfect ones, form a minority that may be even smaller."

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope we're never associated or clumped in as politicians responsible for setting legislation for a province with the beautiful people — the slender, the fair, the perfect ones — for none of us can sit or stand in this House and say we are the beautiful people — the fair, the slender or the perfect ones.

1730

I thought for a few moments today that I would explain to you and give you a little bit of a history of some of the classrooms I was privileged to have in the various schools in Sudbury, the various schools that I was a teacher at, a vice-principal or a principal. They were classrooms that had special needs students in them, special education students in them, integrated in most cases but segregated in some instances as well. Let me tell you it is a privilege to say that you've worked with this type of individuals. The privilege extended to those students who had disabilities and exceptionalities that ranged from developmentally handicapped, Down syndrome, autistic, deaf-blind students, students with spina bifida, developmentally delayed students. I think we ran the gamut.

You had to go to any one of those classrooms, whether it be a segregated or an integrated classroom, to see the importance and the beauty of what can happen when people work together, when everyone has a common goal, a common need, when everyone understands that the bottom line in everything is the child whom we work with. So you saw an interaction between the child, the parent, the teacher, the early childhood educator, the developmental social worker. You saw the student aide, you saw parents come into the school, work with the student, but work as one member of a bigger group. We worked as a team.

It didn't only happen in the classroom though. It was beautiful when you saw all those people responsible for the education of a child with a disability working together within the confines of a school, but it was even more beautiful when you saw it happening in the home of the child, when you saw it happening in the community that housed the child. It happened on a continuing basis, and it happened because the resources were there to make it happen.

Don't ever think for a second that you can do this without resources. I don't think it's the intent of the government to deny resources to these children, to these children's families, but it's happening. I don't understand, for the life of me or for the good of these children, why you in opposition as government cannot understand that we must commit funding to this group of children, to this group of individuals. It's not enough to say that the funding's there but it's not being increased, because the demand placed upon us is increasing. As the demands increase, we must definitely provide increased dollars.

There is no magic answer to the situation, but there is a simple answer to the situation. It is to make sure that we commit enough money to the education system to allow school boards and individual schools to continue to employ early childhood workers, to continue to employ socially adapted workers, to ensure that we have enough resources in the school board and in the classroom and in the school to provide for student aides. We're not looking at teacher aides; we're looking at aides for the student, something that will help ensure that the child is treated as an individual, is respected as a person, with the knowledge that although they may be differently abled, they are able. It's something that the government would do well to understand.

I think of Bel Kaufman when she says: "Education is not a product. It's not a mark, diploma, job, money, in that order. It is a process, a never-ending process." I think that's what this government has to understand. As you look at educational funding, I don't want you to look at it as a business. I'm sorry, a child is not a product; a child deserves a process that is never-ending. In fact, if we're ever going to maximize the benefit of our educational dollars, we must ensure that we understand — you in particular, because you are the government — that funding for education is the best investment that you as a government can make, and that funding in education will provide for fairness for everyone.

The minister earlier spoke about the appeals process, and I think it's important that we spend just a few minutes talking about the appeals process, for the special

services at home funding envelope. Clearly, it's our position that there isn't enough money in that funding envelope. But there is an appeal process, so an individual or a family goes through the appeals process and they get a letter from a ministry staffer that says: "The special services at home program has a fixed resource base. The appeals process is not the mechanism that will lead to an increase in the resources available to this program." I think that sends a terrible message, not only to that individual, but to all the people who require that program.

When you look at needs increasing by about 2,000 over the course of the last two years, you must understand that money has to be increased in the program. But you also must understand that these families don't like to compete against each other. They understand the uniqueness and the individuality of each case; they also understand the need in each case. Ladies and gentlemen, I want you, in particular the minister, to relook at the program, see how the need has increased, look at ways of increasing the funding — certainly the money is there — and ensure that each individual who needs this special funding is given this special funding. Indeed, we must understand that the youth of Ontario is its future. They deserve a chance, every single one of them.

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): It is with great pleasure that I rise. I want to thank my honourable colleague for allowing me the opportunity to say a few things about some of the things the loyal opposition has said about transportation. I beg to differ, obviously, and for good reason at that. This government was elected to do better for less. I believe we are, on that scope.

The Leader of the Opposition would have you believe that we have no heart, that we do not care about disabled transit, that we have cut funding. On the contrary; that has not happened. We have not cut one dollar from disabled transit. This is something I said last year; this is something we've been saying all along. But as a matter of fact, something else I have been saying all along is that we are encouraging the transit operators to find efficiencies within the transit system. The opportunities that are there should be the funds that we would eventually save, not at the expense of disabled transit.

Governments have been saying "Yes, yes, yes," for far too long, and we have built a disabled transit system that is not affordable and is not feasible. It isn't working. We are spending three or four times the amount of money that we should be spending. That is one of the reasons why in August we announced a pilot project where we basically have asked transportation authorities from across the province to come up with innovative ways, working together with MTO staff and municipal affairs, to see if we can take advantage of the equipment we have sitting on a day-to-day basis, sitting not doing anything.

1740

I'm really proud to say that we have taken the initiative in making sure these opportunities are within our grasp. We are asking municipalities to come forward: "Put your objectives together. We will work with you." We're even encouraging the private sector to come up with innovative ways so we can better utilize and deliver transportation.

I just have one other item I would like to mention. I don't know if the member for London Centre is really aware of this program that has been put together in her own city. In the city of London we have a pilot project in place right now where this opportunity is starting to take place, to take effect, to see how we can better deliver transit in a more cost-efficient way but at the same time utilize the equipment, and most important, give the disabled better service and give Ontarians a bigger bang for their buck.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate. I have been here since question period listening to the debate very intensely, and I appreciate the candour and the response we've received on all sides of the House.

As someone who has participated in debates in this House for over 11 years and witnessed many of the issues that have been raised in this Parliament over the course of that 11 years, I want to bring to the closing portion of this debate this evening some of my concerns and expressions of hope for the changes which are about to occur in this province as they relate not only to seniors but to those persons in life who are differently abled or disabled.

I wanted to start off by saying that quite clearly we in this province, all of us as citizens, accept the collective responsibility for the financial situation we find ourselves in. It bears repeating briefly, but we are all aware of it. Over the course of the last decade, we've seen our deficit grow from \$27 billion to nearly \$100 billion, and we've realized that the largest single program the government pays for on behalf of taxpayers is our debt service. If the direction we continue in doesn't stop, all the money we spend on health care will be surpassed by the amount we pay in debt service for this growing debt. We take the collective responsibility, therefore, for how we find solutions out of this problem.

Yes, our government clearly enunciated its direction with the Common Sense Revolution and, yes, we made that known to the citizens of Ontario a year in advance of the election. We wanted them to know how we would implement our plan in order to make those reforms. In that document there were clear and concise and determined references to what we would do to assist seniors, issues which we had raised on the floor of the Legislature for almost a decade, whether it was the separation of seniors and the disabled from our welfare rolls to give them the dignity and the support they require; quite frankly, separating them from being treated in the same category as welfare recipients.

What is of concern to me, having listened to part of the debate — I want to go back to a critical time in history, which was 10 years ago, 11 years ago, when we had a minority government here and an opportunity for the party that came second and the party that came third to create a document which defined, for those politicians and those political parties, the future direction for this province. Clearly, they created in the accord document the opportunity to seize power and to direct the spending patterns for taxpayers and the programs of support and assistance to those most vulnerable.

I have in front of me that document. I keep it in my desk as a reminder of what the priorities were of the two political parties that each had the responsibility to manage and run the affairs of this province for five years. When I read the document I can't find the word "support" for seniors or the vulnerable or the disabled anywhere in this document.

If you read the opening statement, it says that on May 2, 1985, "The people of Ontario created an opportunity for change after 42 years of Conservative government." They said, "We are determined to accept responsibility for bringing about that change."

Well, we had a decade to see where the priorities were set by those governments, and we have had now a decade for this government sitting in opposition to understand where its priorities would be best spent.

I have listened very carefully to the debate. My colleague from St Catharines, with whom I enjoy lively debate from time to time, has indicated in his statements the need to protect those who cannot protect themselves, yet I am aware of programs and decisions made by that government during that five-year period, promises that were made but were never kept with respect to where their sense of priorities was. That was the government that built more school spaces, new renovations, expansion, a lot of capital, yet we have a situation where we've understood now as a society that it's not the bricks and mortar that are defining these program needs, that in fact the direction we should have gone is quite the opposite direction in terms of providing services at home.

This government has made a very clear determination that when it comes between institutionalization, whether it comes to building to create these large bureaucracies and entrench them, we want the flexibility in support that flows directly from programs and flows directly to those person who need them. That is not a theme, that is a commitment, and it's a commitment that our government has made.

The member for Dovercourt, another colleague in this House with whom I've enjoyed lively debate, named me as someone who rose in this House on many occasions to fight for additional funding for the special services at home program. The truth is that I rose in this House to fight for those programs because it was very clear, under the leadership of Mike Harris, that our party was prepared to govern and set priorities. What was happening in 1993, which the member for Dovercourt failed to remind the members of this House of, was that the former Treasurer, the member for Nickel Belt, who's in the House, who knows better than most the kinds of financial difficulties that this province had found itself in, imposed on his own budget and his own government an expenditure control plan. What was happening was that they were starting to reduce access to these programs. We said, "There's lots of programs you can reduce and in fact get rid of, and we want you to maintain and honour your commitment, because we believe you can invest more money in this area."

We won the day because of the debate in the House, because we were able to bring families forward, because we were able to make our arguments about the human side of this issue. But the truth of the matter was that in those days there was this committee of people, mostly in

organized labour, friends of the NDP, who were vetting these programs, and they were saying: "Well, special services at home. You can go hire someone who's qualified, but they're not in a union, and that disrupts the way we think the province should be run." That's why the program wasn't getting the kind of expansion dollars it deserved.

I can tell you, on this side of the House we trust families to make those kinds of decisions; we trust families to make those critical decisions. That's why the program has been supported by this government and will continue to be supported, but as its basis we are prepared to work directly with families.

I'm surprised there hasn't been more discussion and debate about some of the very positive programs occurring under the current administration, occurring in the individual associations. A reference was made earlier by one of the members — I believe the member from Agincourt talked about the associations for community living. I want to share with the members of the House that there is some really progressive work going on in communities to deal with providing increased access, more efficient delivery of service for the disabled community.

In my community, the Burlington Association for Community Living has 17 group homes and 110 beds. They developed a program with a live-in model, it's called, or house mentoring program, where instead of having staff coming in in shifts around the clock, families actually move in and manage this. They're saving \$50,000 per home. As a result of those savings passed on to taxpayers, with the same dollars that they were getting they have been able to increase seven places. They are actually building more group homes in communities in the municipality of Burlington.

1750

What they're doing is they're taking traditional ways of doing business, the way we've serviced and assisted the disabled in this province, and we've done it that way for 30 or 40 years, and they're saying, "We know there's a better way of doing it and we know that if we work directly with what families need, we can get more efficient use of those dollars and greater access."

I'll give you a second example. In group homes all over this province, in Halton and in a couple of other areas in this province, they decided they would eliminate the little staff office in every group home. They didn't need it; it was just something the staff felt they should have in every group home, but it used up valuable space. What they did was designate this as a guest room, and respite care now is being offered in this space. By simply making that change, they've opened up opportunities for respite care without increasing cost to taxpayers.

This government is promoting those programs, we're encouraging those programs, and we're increasing access for the families who are raising their children and need the respite and for those in the disabled community to live with more dignity.

I have other examples of flexibility in day programming and in child services, in preschool programming for disabled, that again are hallmarks to the approach this government is taking with respect to doing better under the financial circumstances that we find ourselves in — still protecting these programs, still enforcing them with

a financial commitment, but yes, finding more creative ways. And we're doing it because we're listening, listening to what groups who are leading by example are providing for us.

The special services at home program is underutilized, and we should as a government be allowing associations for community living to assist families who are having difficulty. It hasn't been raised in the debate, but it's very difficult for families with disabled children because they have to do the training, the hiring, putting the ads in the paper, they have to do all this work, and then maybe not come up with a person who is capable and able to fit in with that family schedule. We need to step in and assist. We're still spending the money, but are we getting the maximum value in support for it?

The point I want to raise here — I know it's been raised about the drug plan, and I wish I had a little more time to talk about that. I listened with interest when my colleague from London Centre raised in the House — she sat in cabinet when her government, Ruth Grier, made it abundantly clear that it was their government's choice to bring in a copayment and a premium. I was in the House as I heard the Liberals make reference to this program as well.

The drug plan in this province has been typified over the last decade as clever and clandestine moves to remove some 200 drugs from the formulary. Many of these were expensive drugs, particularly designed for senior citizens. Liberal and NDP governments all across Canada have come to the conclusion that for an insurance drug plan to survive, you had to allow for participation in the premiums. The alternative was to water down and diffuse and to dismantle your drug plan so that seniors in Ontario two years ago were having to go into their pockets to pay \$80, \$90 and \$100 for drugs that those political parties removed from the formulary.

We are reinforcing the drug plan. We are saving the drug plan. We have expanded 250-some-odd drugs into the plan, and those are drugs where seniors and the disabled are not responsible for paying 100% of their cost. Drugs are becoming increasingly more expensive as a result.

Frankly, the motion, as has been presented by the opposition party, is rather late in their collective history of support for the disabled and seniors, but as always, the debate and their contribution is welcome.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Mrs McLeod has moved opposition day motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1756 to 1800.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one by one.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Martin, Tony
Boyd, Marion	Gravelle, Michael	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Miclash, Frank
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard

Caplan, Elinor	Kennedy, Gerard
Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Duncan, Dwight	Martel, Shelley

Phillips, Gerry
Pouliot, Gilles
Pupatello, Sandra
Ruprecht, Tony
Silipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud

The Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise one by one.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Harnick, Charles	Ross, Lillian
Baird, John R.	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Boushy, Dave	Jackson, Cameron	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Skarica, Toni
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Smith, Bruce
Clement, Tony	Jordan, W. Leo	Spina, Joseph
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Ecker, Janet	Leach, Al	Stockwell, Chris
Elliott, Brenda	Marland, Margaret	Tascaona, Joseph N.
Eves, Ernie L.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Flaherty, Jim	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	O'Toole, John	Vankoughnet, Bill
Froese, Tom	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Villeneuve, Noble
Galt, Doug	Palladini, Al	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.	Wilson, Jim
Grimmett, Bill	Pettit, Trevor	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter	Young, Terence H.
Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 30, the nays 65.

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to standing order 34, the question that the House now adjourn is deemed to have been made. However, the member for Sudbury has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Health. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): First I would like to note that the rebuttal will be by the parliamentary assistant, Mrs Johns. The minister has left the chamber, and it's my understanding that he's not coming back. I would like that to go on the record, and normally we don't do that, but I want you to understand that this is very serious to the people of Sudbury, to the people of northeastern Ontario. I'm amazed that the minister wouldn't be here to listen to this five-minute reasoning so that he could at least contemplate a change of mind. This brashness, this pure arrogance will not be acceptable to the people of Sudbury or northeastern Ontario. Having said that, we

have some very serious concerns to deal with over the course of the next few minutes.

The minister should know that the responses from the community are exactly as predicted. Hospital closings shock communities, for one. All I can say is, don't get sick; you'd better stay healthy. I see with regret that the General and Memorial hospitals will be closed. I guess the commission failed to see that we have at the General the only paediatric floor and the best trauma unit for all of northern Ontario. At the Memorial we have the best cardiac services in all of northern Ontario.

It is amazing to me that this government can downsize health services in northeastern Ontario so drastically. We are reducing from 558 beds down to 395, a reduction of acute care beds that will create chaos within northeastern Ontario. We are looking at a total bed downsizing of under 500; 495 beds will not be enough beds to deal with the health care services required if Sudbury is going to be a northeastern referral centre. I don't know, but maybe it's the intent of the government to go ahead with this restructuring and then, a year before the election, announce a multibillion-dollar expansion of health care services at North Bay so that North Bay can become the northeastern referral centre. It certainly has happened throughout the mandate of this government so far.

The dollars they're reinvesting in this community are disastrous. There is not enough money for transitional care: \$2.8 million to \$3.2 million just isn't enough money; \$1.2 million of reinvestment in home care is just not enough money; specialist recruitment at \$3.3 million is just not enough money; repatriation at \$2 million is just not enough money.

The minister is well aware that the regional municipality of Sudbury sent him a brief outlining that a minimum of 100 repatriated beds is necessary. You will not get 100 repatriated beds with \$3 million. Chronic care reinvestment of \$1.4 million is actually disgusting and it is an insult to reinvest only that much money; rehabilitation at \$600,000 is clearly not enough; acute mental health reinvestment of \$700,000 is clearly not enough.

Today we received the Premier's ministerial statement for redistribution. Clearly the Premier of this province wants less representation in northern Ontario. Clearly the Minister of Health wants less quality health care in northern Ontario. As I said earlier, and I reaffirm, forget the voice for the north. From now on everything that comes from this Conservative government for the north should be titled No Beds, No Meds, No MPPs.

I find the commission's report disgusting, and it must be changed.

1810

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): I am frankly surprised by the request for a late show after having read the questions and answers in yesterday's Hansard. I believe that the Minister of Health stated clearly what he believes is happening with respect to hospital restructuring. I would like to take the balance of my time to go over what he said in the House yesterday about, "Ontario is the last province" in Canada "to undergo hospital restructuring."

The process is necessary to ensure that we have high-quality patient care and that at the end of the day patient care is available to the people of Ontario. We have taken

the politics out of health care. We have appointed a Health Services Restructuring Commission to ensure that all aspects of health care in the region are taken into account before they make their recommendations. They are telling us what the people in the community want.

Another challenge facing the commission is to recommend that training programs be available so that not only will restructuring be done, but the expertise we have in each community remains in place. I would argue that restructuring will attract more expertise into your area.

Every detail of the announcement from the Health Services Restructuring Commission has been justified. They are using data provided by Dr David Naylor and the research team of the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. After the commission issues its report, there is a 30-day period for the community to express its support and concerns for the recommendations. The member opposite should make a submission for the commission so that his views are heard, but he should also remember that he needs to provide concrete solutions based on fact if he is to see results.

I would like also to remind the member of two very important issues.

First, our government has made the largest reinvestment to date of \$170 million into community-based care. This alone will create 4,400 new jobs in the province and will provide better services so that people in Ontario will not fall through the cracks. We have spent approximately \$37 million of the \$170 million so that there are more services, and there is more money yet to be expended. Both Sudbury and Thunder Bay have had tremendous increases in their home care budgets in the last few years to ensure that patients do not fall through the cracks.

We are doing what other governments have failed to do: ensure that services are in place before the beds are closed. Previous governments have closed 6,700 beds, or the equivalent of 33 midsized hospitals, without ensuring that community services are developed first. I would like to point out as well that we are reinvesting this money first before we have seen any savings from hospital restructuring.

Second, we are making these reinvestments with \$2.1 billion less from the federal Liberal government, your cousins. If the federal government had met its commitments, our job would be significantly easier.

We are not following politics like we did in the past. We are not reinvesting in the fourth year of our mandate. We are making sure, Mr Bartolucci, that we manage the health care system so it will be there for our children and our children's children.

We are confident that at the end of the process, as many other provinces have told us, the people of Ontario will continue to have the best health care in the world.

The honourable member said that there is not enough money in health care. We say \$17.4 billion is enough money in the system. Taxpayers pay one third of every tax dollar to health care in Ontario. We believe the system must be managed for them and it must be restructured so that the health care system will be there for all generations.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The member for Riverdale has served notice of dissatisfaction with an

answer given on the family support plan by the Attorney General. This may be debated by the member for up to five minutes, and the minister may reply for five minutes.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): First, let me be clear. As has been said by many members of my caucus over the past few weeks on this issue, I do not deny that the family support plan needed improvement. That's obvious, and that's what the minister keeps saying, somehow putting the blame on this government and what we didn't or did do. The fact remains that improvements needed to be made and there were lots of problems.

The issue we're talking about here is that people, women and their children who used to get cheques, are not getting their cheques —

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Wrong.

Ms Churley: — and that is a fact.

Hon Mr Harnick: Wrong.

Ms Churley: The minister is already saying: "Wrong. Wrong." I will be getting to that in a second. However, your actions have clearly not improved the system; in fact they have decimated it.

You've laid off 290 experienced and trained staff, closed the regional offices and expected the phone system to handle all the calls which were once handled by regional offices. You ended the case management system which ensured accountability for particular files by someone who was familiar with the case, and files are being put in boxes and are in transit to a new location. The process has nothing to do with getting essential support to children. It has everything to do with the cuts ordered to the AG's ministry and the determination to gut the plan.

Since the closure of the offices, the complaints are from cases where payment was being made, where families were counting on that money and were put in jeopardy because those payments, which had been deducted from the payor — this is not about that issue, which is another problem — did not get into the hands of the women and children. There are not enough staff to do the person-intensive work of ensuring the transition is completed even if there are some problems such as no file number on the cheque.

I say to the minister, you're not fixing the family support plan. You're destroying the very thing that made it the best agency for collection of family support anywhere. In fact your own ministry, in its own business plan of 1996, stated, "Ontario is the most cost-per-case efficient program in Canada." So what's happening here is you're making sure that even more children are left without basic necessities rather than making the moneys available to make sure they get the support they're entitled to.

After laying off hundreds of people, you have been forced to hire contract staff to answer the phones who clearly have no training or commitment to the program. They tell desperate women, and I have heard this directly myself, "Why don't you just go out and get a job?" One woman in Hamilton who finally got through to a live person today was told the person answering the phone

was basically just an answering service and she said she would try to get the information or an agent back to her.

Minister, in order for the family support plan to work well, it needs the investment of funds, human resources and government commitment. You are destroying the family support plan in the name of improving it. The Harris government is not committed to the family support plan and does not see the collection of dollars ordered by the court for the benefit of children as a high priority.

I want to talk directly about what the minister said in answer to my question this afternoon about four cases in my riding. He was wrong about that information: wrong, wrong, wrong. I have talked directly to the women. Case one, all the money, she has not received her August support payment. She has made that clear to me. She's still expecting \$1,400. Case two, you stated that there was a problem with the income source, but Ruby White says she has checked with the husband's employer and they say he's up to date. She's still owed \$624. Case three, I'm not quite sure what's going on there. I can't speak to it at the moment. I'll be checking into it. Case four, you say you didn't get enough information. Her file number was provided with the —

Interjection.

Ms Churley: Yes, it is. I've got a copy of it here, Minister, of the file number. You could have followed up with my office or the woman herself. Plus you had all their names and you said you would help.

1820

I want to close by saying you cannot manage this on a micro basis. You cannot manage all of these case by case. It's impossible to do. This needs a macro, big solution. As long as you continue to do it this way, I believe that some women who don't have access to their MPPs are probably being displaced by you phoning up the very few staff who are available, saying, "Let's make these a priority because MPPs are after us."

There are some real problems with trying to fix a major problem in the system by having MPPs going directly to the Attorney General asking for help. It clearly isn't working. The women have told me themselves that it isn't working. The Attorney General disagrees with that and is saying they're not telling the truth, but I'm telling him what they're saying. I would end by saying that this is no way to fix the plan.

Hon Mr Harnick: We are at the present time reconstructing the family support plan. Our motivation for reconstructing the family support plan is to ensure that the days of people phoning the plan and not being able to get through will end. We want to ensure that cheques are going to get out to clients of the plan in a faster and more up-to-date way in terms of the modern banking techniques that are now available. We're restructuring the plan to permit that to happen.

We also are going — and I intend to do this within the next week or so — to introduce a piece of legislation that for the first time will provide the family support plan with real tools to collect moneys owing to women and children. That amount is now \$900 million. That amount was allowed to go, during the former government's period of time, from \$300 million to \$900 million, without anybody taking the initiative to bring in legisla-

tion to provide enforcement tools to permit the plan to operate.

Yes, we have had a problem in terms of getting cheques out. That problem has been rectified. We are providing a service that is necessary to ensure that all payments are being made while we go through the transition. We are targeting November for the opening of a new and modern centre out of which the plan will run. We are hiring and training new staff, many of whom will be some of the former staff of the plan, whom we've encouraged to apply for jobs. The difference is going to be that when people call the family support plan they will be able to get through, as clients should be able to, and the person who answers the phone will, for most cases, be able to provide an answer to the client immediately. That's the goal and the customer service that we want to provide to clients of the family support plan.

At the same time, those administrative improvements will mesh with the new enforcement techniques we are going to provide: the licence suspension, the reporting to credit bureaus, the expansion of the definition of "income source," the ability to get at people who are sheltering money in joint bank accounts. We are doing all of those things, all of those things that a prior government had no guts to deal with.

I want to deal with the four cases that my colleague from Riverdale has pointed out.

In the first case, I can tell you that every payment has been made, except that the payor is in arrears and the plan is trying to collect the arrears. All moneys that have been received by the plan have been dispersed. The

moneys owing are owing because not all the payment has been made by the payor. It's as simple as that.

The second case involves an income source who is remitting at the legislated requirement of 50% of net wages. Additional enforcement action has been initiated to recover arrears. The last payment was sent to the recipient on September 23, 1996, and it was done by direct deposit right into that individual's account. The member for Riverdale screamed across the floor at me, yelling: "The August payment has not been made. The August payment has not been made." Well, I can assure you that the August payment has been made.

The third case is a case involving an initial support deduction notice having just been sent to the employer on September 16, 1996. The income source, the employer, now has 14 days to make the necessary calculations and payroll adjustments and must commence deductions no later than the first payday that falls after the 14 days. So that would be a payday coming up some time after October 1. That is why that case has not yet remitted money: None has been received. The income source has just received the notice and the time clock is ticking.

In so far as the final case is concerned, as I've indicated, we had difficulty dealing with locating it. We've been able to, and I hope that will be rectified.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Time is up, Minister.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1826.

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Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Norfolk	Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Northumberland	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Oakwood	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
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Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)	Ottawa-Rideau	Ruprecht, Tony (L)
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)	Oxford	
		Parkdale	

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Hon / L'hon Ed (PC) Speaker / Président
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
		York Mills	Tumbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Wednesday 2 October 1996

Mercredi 2 octobre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Ed Doyle

Président
L'honorable Ed Doyle

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 octobre 1996

*The House met at 1332.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): Northern Ontario faces unique challenges in providing social, educational and health initiatives to the people living within this region.

On page 3 of the famous Tory election document entitled *A Voice for the North*, Mike Harris stated: "The people of northern Ontario have given us a clear message: Their needs and concerns are not being met by the provincial government...that northerners feel left out of the decision-making process." Then we found out yesterday that the Premier's answer to fixing this problem is to cut even further the north's voice at Queen's Park.

I have here a resolution from the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce calling upon the Premier to appoint an assistant deputy minister who will work with and reside in northwestern Ontario.

Northwestern Ontario business community and municipal leaders, after 16 months of Tory government, continue to feel left out of the decision-making process. I call upon the government to commit to residents of northwestern Ontario that the recommendation by the chambers of commerce will be given every consideration.

Mr Premier, over the summer I travelled throughout my riding and met with business people, education, health care and municipal leaders. The reaction I received was that northerners are feeling isolated from your government's policy to centralize decision-making for the north in your office here in Toronto. Your decision yesterday to reduce northern representation in the Legislature is just the latest insult to an already frustrated northern Ontario.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I want to say to the people of Hamilton and other communities that what is happening in Thunder Bay and Sudbury with regard to their hospital closures needs to be a wake-up call for all. In our own community of Hamilton we had a near crisis as a result of this government's forcing the task force to cut their time in half, from two years to one year, and they came up with a plan that included the closure of St Joseph's Hospital in the heart of downtown Hamilton.

There was such an outcry that a new group had to form, the Academic-Health Care Network, and they, working together and cooperatively, came up with a plan that allowed us to save St Joseph's Hospital and keep all the other hospitals that we have in Hamilton. But that

plan was predicated on our community of Hamilton being able to keep all the money saved on the institutional side in our community invested in community services.

I call on the four Tory MPPs from my area to make sure that when your Minister of Health's hatchet commission comes to Hamilton, you stand up and fight for Hamilton and not just stand up and toe the party line. We need to and we can save all the hospitals in Hamilton. We have a plan that will work, but you have to convince your minister that we keep that money and reinvest it. And maybe you ought to be doing the same thing for the people in Sudbury, because they need some help too.

DUFFERIN-CALEDON HEALTH CARE CORP

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I rise in the House today to highlight the success story of the fund-raising efforts of the Dufferin-Caledon Health Care Corp in my riding of Dufferin-Peel.

The Dufferin-Caledon Health Care Corp is building a new facility to serve the residents of Dufferin county and the town of Caledon. The amount of \$5.2 million must be raised by the community to prepare the health care centre for its new home at the corner of Highways 9 and 10. This capital campaign is being led by honorary chair George Eaton and a group of very talented and committed individuals from within Dufferin and Caledon.

As well as traditional fund-raising events, this committee has tapped into an expanding market of funds through private sector partnerships. In recent weeks Husky Injection Mouldings of Bolton donated \$1 million to the health care centre. This donation will allow our new health care facility to be the first in the world to have digitized diagnostic imaging, or filmless X-rays. The addition of digitized diagnostic imaging means that Headwaters will have leading-edge technology that will save space on storage, reduce radiation to the patients by at least 30%, lessen chemical disposal costs and, finally, decrease operating costs.

Husky Injection Mouldings chose this donation because it ties in with their commitment to the environment. Husky's head office and the Headwaters Health Care Centre both have tried to design their facilities to work with the environment. For example, landscaping around both facilities used native plants that will thrive with very little maintenance or water. Both facilities were designed to take advantage of natural light, and both sort their garbage for reuse and recycling prior to disposal. This partnership proves that the public and private sectors can work together for the benefit of their communities.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I rise today on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus to acknowledge

and show our support and appreciation for teachers as we recognize World Teachers' Day on October 5.

Unlike the Tory government and its Minister of Education and Training, teachers throughout Ontario and indeed the world understand the significance of the following quote: "Education is not a product, mark, diploma, job, money — in that order. It is a process, a never-ending one."

1340

Teachers everywhere work hard to ensure that students under their supervision are prepared and grow as this process continues. Teachers realize that students do not come to school all equal, so through their dedication, determination and diligence, they provide a meaningful, individualized day for each of their students. They face the real crisis of reduced funding to their classrooms every single solitary day, and they handle it in a very mature, responsible, caring and loving way. Their impact is most positive on the life of each of their charges.

On a very personal basis, I would like to recognize each and every teacher I have had the honour of working with over the last 30 years. Let me mention John, Gary and Linda Kingerski, grandfather, father and mother of Stephen Kingerski, our page from Sudbury. They and all other teachers are worthy of our recognition, our support and our thanks. Teachers are the keys to unlocking the future of not only Ontario and Canada but in fact the entire world.

ST JULIAN PARK

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm happy today to share with members of the Legislature a very special celebration that we had in my riding last Sunday, and that was the reopening of St Julian Park.

The story of St Julian Park is the story of a community that came together to clean up a former dump site, a community that came together because of the efforts of a group of people who had played in St Julian Park as youngsters and found that, among their numbers, an inordinate number were contracting and dying of brain cancer. The one who led this is a woman named Dianne Whiteside because of her dedication to her brother who died of brain cancer, his cancer clearly connected to the environmental issues around St Julian Park. She made a pledge that she would see that park cleaned up and reopened within 10 years. Last Sunday she saw that dream come true.

Because of the efforts of dedicated environmentalists in my community, a very dangerous situation was cleared. It took a lot of effort, a lot of commitment, and as a result of those environmentalist issues being raised in council, winning support on council, we now have a beautiful park where the children of St Julian can play in safety forevermore.

STRATFORD BEACON HERALD

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and announce that a very prestigious honour has just been awarded to one of the finest daily newspapers in Canada. I've just established this distinc-

tion and felt that it was important to bring this to the attention of the Ontario Legislature.

The city of Stratford, indeed the whole of Perth, is famous throughout Ontario and around the world for the many attractions that it has to offer. Its theatres, its scenery, its manufacturing, its agriculture and its community organizations are second to none.

There are more than 46 daily newspapers delivered to the Legislative Assembly each morning, and of these, only one originates in the riding of Perth. The Stratford Beacon Herald is an independent daily and is renowned for its accurate reporting and in-depth editorials.

It's this paper, the Stratford Beacon Herald, which I am proud to announce has received my red ribbon award for the best picture and headline, front page category, Canadian daily newspaper. Their award-winning edition was printed, of course, on Wednesday, September 25, 1996.

BOOKER PRIZE

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I rise today to congratulate Toronto's Margaret Atwood and Brampton's Rohinton Mistry on being nominated for the prestigious Booker prize. The Booker is awarded annually to the best full-length novel written in English by a citizen of the Commonwealth, and Ontario should be proud to have two authors of the six short-listed for this prize.

Toronto's Margaret Atwood is nominated for her book *Alias Grace*, and Brampton's Rohinton Mistry is nominated for *A Fine Balance*. Both books are published by Toronto's McClelland and Stewart, who should also be congratulated.

My fear is that given this government's complete abandonment of the arts community, where will our Booker prizewinners of tomorrow come from? Margaret Atwood got her start at Coach House Press. Mike Harris called that company a bunch of welfare bums, cancelled their loan guarantee program and put them out of business.

The minister of culture has axed the publishers assistance program, wiped out the Ontario Publishing Centre, and has cut funds to the Ontario Arts Council by one third.

These cuts are coming at a time when book publishing in Canada is an unparalleled success as a cultural industry. Canadian-authored books have a 30% market share, exports of Canadian books tripled in the last five years, and as yesterday's Booker announcement indicates, Canadian writers are being acclaimed worldwide.

By making so many cuts to our arts industry so quickly, this government is seriously threatening the publishing industry's ability to produce the next Margaret Atwood or Rohinton Mistry.

I'm sure all Ontarians will join me in wishing both authors good luck when the Booker is awarded on October 29.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I'm giving the Premier and the Minister of Environment yet another

opportunity to keep the Premier's election promise that any new landfills would be subject to, in his words, "a full environmental assessment." I'll remind the Premier that this isn't just something said off the cuff on the campaign trail; he committed himself to environmental assessment on dumps both before and since the election. He has also said it here quite adamantly in the House.

We're currently, in committee, examining Bill 76 which deals with changes — I would say the gutting of the Environmental Assessment Act. In August I spoke to Mr Sterling, the new environmental minister, and I agreed to postpone our clause-by-clause examination so that he could look at and fix this glaring omission, among others. Well, the bill is back in committee and where is the fix? Where are the amendments? Where is the outspoken commitment on the part of the Premier that he would solve the garbage crisis in a way that didn't compromise Ontario's environment?

As the proposed bill stands, companies and municipalities will no longer necessarily have to look at alternatives such as reducing, reusing and recycling, nor will they have to look at alternative sites or designs which may be more suitable, nor will they have to examine economic and social impacts. The bill also substantially reduces public participation despite the bill's ridiculous title: the Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act.

Mr Minister, come clean and fix this bill.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): As parliamentary assistant for colleges and universities, I rise today to congratulate the Ontario College of Art and Design on its first 120 years.

For over a century, the college has acted as an incubator for some of our most talented artists and designers. The roster of their graduates reads like a who's who of the international art and design community, including A.J. Casson, a member of the Group of Seven; Mimi Vander-molen, chief designer for the Ford Motor Co; and, of particular interest to those of us in this House, one of our most famous political cartoonists, the late Duncan Macpherson.

The impact of the college and its students can be seen in every community in Ontario. Graduates have designed the logos of prominent organizations such as TSN, the Toronto Blue Jays, CIBC and Rogers Cablesystems, and faculty member Claude Gidman designed the latest streetcars and Wheel-Trans buses for the TTC.

Not content to rest on its laurels, the college recently changed its name from the Ontario College of Art to the Ontario College of Art and Design, thus incorporating a major component of its program and recognizing the importance of design to its future.

With a proud history and a bright future, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the Ontario College of Art and Design for the great work it has done in promoting and enhancing Canadian talent and culture, and offer our best wishes for the college's next 120 years.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FAMILY SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): In the Common Sense Revolution, we promised that we would crack down on defaulting parents who are not fulfilling their family support obligations. Later today, I will have the honour of tabling the legislation that will fulfil our government's commitment.

The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, will replace the Family Support Plan Act, 1992. Our legislation will create the Family Responsibility Office and will give Ontario some of the toughest support payment enforcement legislation in North America.

1350

Mr Speaker, 77% of the family support plan's cases are not in full compliance. Close to \$1 billion is outstanding in child support payments. This is money owed to the children of this province. When child support is not paid, women and children are denied the support they need. They suffer and are forced to go without. Often they are forced into poverty and on to social assistance. This is unacceptable. As Attorney General, I am committed to ensuring that the needs of Ontario's children and women are met.

The legislation I will be introducing will give the Family Responsibility Office tough new enforcement measures to ensure payors meet their support obligations. Under our new legislation, we will suspend the drivers' licences of those who refuse to meet their family support responsibilities. We will report to credit bureaus the names of people who do not pay their child support. We will obtain financial statements and make orders against third parties who help support payors avoid enforcement by sheltering their assets. We will seize 50% of any funds in a joint bank account of a payor and his or her new partner. We will enter into partnerships with the private sector to collect outstanding support payments. We will also expand the definition of income source to include commissions, salary draws, advances and lump sum payments.

In addition, we will permit recipients and payors, where both agree, to opt out of the government-mandated system. Responsible parents who continue to pay their child support do not need to be supervised by bureaucrats. Measures have been put in place to ensure that vulnerable individuals will be protected from coercion.

We will also implement a number of changes to improve service provided under the new system. Each member here knows that the service their constituents have received to date has been unacceptable. This has been the case for many, many years.

With a caseload of approximately 148,000 cases and an average of 1,400 new cases every month, the family support plan is ill equipped to handle its caseload. The plan receives up to 50,000 calls a day to its offices. Of these calls, only 6% of the callers actually get through. Almost 8,000 letters arrive daily, most of which are

complaints from clients about the lack of telephone service.

The eight regional offices provided limited access to counter service. In fact fewer than 60 people a day visited each regional office, and they did so only because they were unable to reach the plan by phone.

These are the facts. The problems with the family support plan have been ongoing since 1987. The plan has never been able to serve its clients well. Our changes are a solution to these long-standing problems.

In July we began to address the problems that have plagued the plan since its inception.

To provide better and more specialized services to the public, we will consolidate all of the operations into one location. The Family Responsibility Office will begin operating in November.

Our goal is to ensure that people get their phone calls answered and callers are immediately provided with the information and service they require. Under the new system, we will more than double the number of front-line workers tackling people's concerns.

Even during the transition phase, we are now processing 25% more cheques per day than last year. As problems have occurred during the transition, we have moved quickly and decisively to correct them. Initially, some cheques were delayed. We have now fixed that problem and there is no backlog in cheques.

Both in terms of enforcement and in service, our government is committed to enhancing justice for children and women in Ontario. The Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, will achieve that goal. I am proud to say that when this bill becomes law, Ontario will have some of the most stringent family support enforcement legislation on the continent, legislation that the opposition parties didn't have the guts to bring to this Legislature.

I hope that I will have the support of the opposition parties so that the Family Responsibility Office will be able to begin collecting more money for women and children than ever before.

In the gallery today is Regina May of Mothers Against Fathers in Arrears and Heinz Paul of Families Against Deadbeats. They are keenly interested that this bill become law as soon as possible.

EDUCATION

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): For the past two days I've been meeting with my fellow ministers of education from the other provinces and territories. The message I bring to members here today is very clear: Ontario is not alone in considering and implementing major restructuring to its education system. Reform is proceeding rapidly in every jurisdiction in Canada no matter what the political stripe or region of the country.

Across Canada governments are streamlining their education systems, reducing administration, increasing standards, improving curriculum quality and placing greater emphasis on parental involvement and control.

I've told my colleagues that Ontario is strongly committed to education accountability. We need better

information on how well our students are learning and, by virtue of that, how well our system is doing. I support further pan-Canadian testing and greater cooperation on key curriculum areas.

Ministers also discussed the continuing importance of technology and building technology skills. All of us see greater technology use by teachers and students as a priority. These are highlights of our discussion. I will continue to work with my colleagues elsewhere in Canada to bring real change and real improvement to learning for all people.

It's important for all members and Ontario citizens to know that we're not alone in our efforts to reform education and to significantly improve the affordability, accountability and quality of our education system for students, parents and all taxpayers.

FAMILY SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'd like to respond to the Attorney General. You've said you're committed to ensuring the needs of Ontario's children and women are met. Frankly, your credibility in this area has been severely undermined by the experience all of us have had over the last three months with the family support plan. If you really believed that, you would not have let those changes go through without ensuring that the program would work. For the people watching out there, thousands and thousands of women were denied their support payments because of your blundering.

The first question anybody responsible for a ministry should have asked is, "Will the women and children of this province be sure to get their rightful payments?" You didn't ask that question. You've lost your credibility in this matter. You dramatically cut 290 people out of the family support staffing, and I resent the way you presented your statement. You changed the wording to make it extremely partisan. Your credibility in this area is severely undermined.

I will guarantee you that our party will give whatever support it possibly can to make certain that women and children of this province benefit from support payments, but we will not support a government that penalizes people by mismanagement and incompetence.

There are several areas in this statement where we'll want to see more detail, particularly about the area where the recipients and payors agree. You go on to say they will be protected from coercion. We want to monitor that very carefully because there are some significant concerns about that area. Over the last few months people literally have lost their homes, have not been able to feed their children, have had difficulty in getting money for their —

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: — and he shakes his head. I also say that the statement of the minister says the problem is solved. That is not true. Members in this Legislature know there are people entitled to cheques who still don't get them. If the minister and the government had been sincere in ensuring that the needs of Ontario's children and women were met, we would not have seen the mess we've seen over the last three months. Every member in this Legislature has gone through the turmoil of hundreds of calls to

our offices from people who are suffering because of this government. You can count on our support for meaningful, legitimate legislative change, but you can't count on our support if you don't follow through with that.

1400

EDUCATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): We have one heavy announcement and we have one light one today. It's ironic that with all the students we have in the gallery this afternoon the minister talks about a consultation he had with other ministers of education across the country, which from time to time is good. I would have thought this would have been the kind of thing for a bulletin within your ministry to help some of the demoralized staff, it seems to me, with all of the things that people are waiting for — the consultation on Bill 100, who does what by whom and where and on what basis, the sub-panel on education that you have asked for reaction. People are waiting to hear about that.

You're consulting with others outside of the jurisdiction when I'm sure you know there are many teachers leaving our jurisdiction because they haven't got jobs. By the way, it's teachers who have jobs but are so despairing of what they see going down in education by the influence of this particular government who are leaving and looking for opportunities in Germany, looking for opportunities in Australia, looking for opportunities in the United States of America, because they can't stand the pressure and the continual attempt to degrade and undercut the professionalism of the teachers we have.

When we look at all of the areas that need attention, I would suggest to you that this kind of thing is perhaps better in a memo internally. We'd love to hear you talk about protecting the classroom, as you talk about, but of course it's not happening.

FAMILY SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm very happy to have an opportunity to respond to the damage control statement that the Attorney General is making today and to say to him that it is absolutely disgraceful for him to make the kind of partisan statements he's made. Let's make it very clear why there have been problems in this plan since 1987 — because there wasn't a plan before that. For 42 years of Conservative rule you did nothing to make sure that women and children got the payments to which they were entitled, and you dare to criticize the previous two governments for their incremental efforts to try and ensure that support payment entitlements are collected.

The minister is well aware because his own document says that the plan in Ontario is the best and most effective plan. We welcome the changes he's suggesting today, which, I might add, the minister knows very well are only possible because of the extensive policy work that was done by our government looking into exactly these enforcement measures. It will be very interesting to see whether the minister has solved the legal problems that do exist around these kinds of enforcement measures, because that is what delayed the implementation of these. We will see what solutions you've come up with.

In addition, what has made this the most effective plan is that it was a deduction at source from everyone. There was no pejorative issue around having a support deduction made from your paycheque. It was to be done for everyone; it was like taxes. Yet this minister is saying that we're going to permit recipients and payors, where both agree, to opt out of the plan. Then what happens? The minister says he's going to protect people from coercion on this. The whole issue of non-payment of support he knows very well is a power and control issue that is there and is very real in these cases. It will be interesting for us to see how this minister thinks he can protect women and children from coercion in these cases.

Finally, as my colleague from Agincourt said, for this minister, who has completely bungled the whole situation around collection, has made sure that the 23% of people who were receiving their payments no longer do and have real difficulties — and case after case shows you that they have — to make the kind of partisan comments he made in this House today is absolutely disgraceful.

He will have our support around the enforcement measures, but he will not have our support, given the incompetence he has shown, in terms of the management of this plan.

EDUCATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I'd like to respond to the non-statement of the Minister of Education and Training. Essentially what the minister informed the House today was that he attended a meeting. He went on to say that all the other provinces or a lot of other provinces are cutting just like him. It's unfortunate that he didn't take the opportunity today, two days before International Teachers' Day, to talk about the efforts made by teachers to ensure that we have excellence in education in this province, to pay tribute to the people who every day work with students across Ontario to ensure that they can reach their potential, that they can gain the skills and abilities they need to do well in life.

This minister has gone around the province for the last year badmouthing teachers, badmouthing school boards and saying the system is broken and failing to recognize that he is the one who is causing the crisis. He took \$400 million out of the system last year and he now wants to take another \$600 million.

This shows what teachers think of this minister. This is what education was and this is what it's becoming, thanks to the Tory government in this province. They're eating away at the quality of education. You're destroying education in this system. Why on earth don't you recognize the role of teachers and pay for the program you need?

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery a South African delegation. Also, please welcome Dr Van Der Ross, a member of the provincial Legislature for Western Cape, Capetown, South Africa. Please join in welcoming our guests today.

ROBERT BOURASSA

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to pay tribute on the passing of former Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): Do we have unanimous consent? Yes.

Hon Mr Eves: Today Premier Harris expressed condolences to the family of Robert Bourassa and the people of Quebec on behalf of all Ontarians. It is with sadness that I rise today to pay a further tribute to M. Bourassa in this House.

For more than a quarter of a century, Robert Bourassa was at the heart of politics and events in Quebec and was a dominant figure in Canadian political life. He was a staunch and thoughtful Quebecker. He was an able and insightful Premier.

Robert Bourassa first became Premier of Quebec in 1970 at the age of 36. Then and throughout his time in politics he put a priority on ensuring a sound economy, growth and prosperity for his province. He will be remembered within Quebec as the Premier who ushered in a period of unprecedented expansion for the Quebec economy.

M. Bourassa was always a moderate who sought to avoid division and to bring people together. He gave leadership to a society that was deeply divided about questions of identity and citizenship. Whether we agree with all of his choices or not, we can never doubt that he based his decisions on what he believed was in the best interests of the people of Quebec. He found the middle path on most issues and in so doing was able to both advance Quebec's interests and preserve Confederation.

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Quebec and indeed Canada has lost an important leader. M. Bourassa was always a friend to the province of Ontario. I know Premier Harris had hoped he would be with us to provide counsel and advice on the difficult choices that lay ahead of us as a country.

Over the past number of years he has worked with and was deeply respected by a series of Ontario premiers representing all three political parties in this House: Premier Davis, Premier Peterson and Premier Rae. Last fall, during the time of the Quebec referendum, he offered his thoughts to Premier Harris as he had done while we were in opposition.

Our sympathies go to the Bourassa family and to the people of Quebec. Robert Bourassa will be sadly missed.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): It is with sadness and a sense of shock and a profound sense of loss that I rise to join in the tribute to Robert Bourassa today.

I did not have the privilege of knowing M. Bourassa personally so, like many others in this House, I have come to know and admire him through the continuous evidence of his personal commitment to his province and most certainly to his country.

Robert Bourassa's political career was not without its challenges. He served as Premier of his province through some of his province's and this country's most tense times. I think he was forced by those challenges to learn some obviously difficult lessons in both politics and

statesmanship. But ultimately, in my view, it was his statesmanship which was the hallmark of his leadership.

I admire his efforts to reconcile the fervencies of Quebec nationalism with his own commitment to Canada and to federalism. He was I suppose a pragmatist, as many have described him; I like to think of him rather as a realist. It seemed to me that he believed in shaping realistic and workable solutions to seemingly intractable problems and that he knew it could be done only one step at a time. The Meech Lake accord is history now, but I continue to hold to a belief that he was successful in this in helping to shape those kind of pragmatic resolutions, although we all shared the lack of success in seeing them carried forward.

I know that his role in that respect has always been the subject of controversy, and his actions within Quebec probably even more so, and I think that's to be expected. The issues related to Quebec's role in Canada and the future of Confederation, after all, have been controversial for over 200 years. No one could expect to provide leadership on these issues and achieve universal agreement.

But there is no question that Robert Bourassa provided leadership. There is no question that his commitment to his province and his country were the basis of his actions and his political life. He carried forward those commitments at the expense of his own health, and we see too clearly today the price that he has paid.

M. Bourassa, on announcing his retirement from politics in September 1993, said how difficult it was to leave, and I would like to refer back to the quote of the day. "It's not an easy day," he acknowledged. "When you give the best of yourself and fight every day, and even take personal risks to achieve the protection of Quebec, you do not leave, you do not leave that function very easily." He went on to speak of his continued commitment to Canada. He said:

"The Quebec Liberal Party is opposed to the breakup of the Canadian federation because Canada, with all its problems, with all its tensions, with all its difficulties, remains by far one of the most enviable countries in the world. I cannot see how we can tell Quebeckers that we can attract the investments that we need, that we can convince investors to come to Quebec, by initiating the process of dismantling the Canadian federation."

M. Bourassa's commitment continued to underlie his actions after his retirement; they continued to underlie his actions even as he battled his own illness, even when public responsibilities no longer demanded his presence or his voice. During the last referendum debate, he worked quietly in less noticeable public places and in relatively unpublicized forums to carry forward the message of his belief that there is a place for Quebec in Canada.

All of us who share that belief in this province and indeed across the nation are deeply appreciative of his leadership and of his commitment. We will miss his presence and his quiet determined passion.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On behalf of my colleagues, I want to join with the Deputy Premier and the leader of the official opposition in expressing our condolences to the Bourassa family and to the people of Quebec on the passing of the former Premier.

Robert Bourassa has served his province, his people and his country throughout his lifetime. When he was first elected in 1970 he was the youngest Premier elected, and he faced enormous challenges at a time of serious, serious division within our Confederation. His commitment to the francophone community and to protecting that community in the anglophone sea of North America was well known and respected.

He served as Premier at a time, as I said, when there was serious division within the province of Quebec and the whole nation of Canada, a division that eventually led to a catastrophe from which I think Mr Bourassa never really recovered, and that was the murder of one of his cabinet colleagues. Some analysts have said that made him a cautious leader subsequently in his career.

His flexibility was well known. His ability to understand the main issue and to determine how he might be able to respond in such a way to try to bring balance to those who, on the one side, wished more extreme measures to be taken to protect French and the Québécois community and, on the other side, those who wished to protect Quebec's role in Confederation is well known.

Many people, his political opponents as well as the press and the general public, sometimes found it frustrating listening to Robert Bourassa give an answer to a question because it was sometimes difficult to know exactly what the Premier meant in terms of his position. But for those of us who knew him slightly — and I only knew him slightly — I understood why he took the position he did. It was a very difficult balancing act he played throughout his career, a balancing act that all of us in Canada should respect and understand that we owe a great debt to him for.

I suspect that the greatest disappointment in his career was the failure of the Meech Lake accord to be ratified in Canada. Mr Bourassa invested a tremendous amount in that agreement, as he saw it as the basis for a way that Quebec could remain and grow within the Canadian Confederation.

When I got to know him slightly it was during the negotiations that led to the Charlottetown accord. At that time Mr Bourassa was suffering from his illness; it was in remission, but many of us around the table felt he was suffering a great deal more than he was prepared to admit to us or publicly. It took a tremendous effort on his part to be able to make clear his commitment to Canada as well as his commitment to Quebec during those negotiations.

I think it's fair to say that he didn't share the same enthusiasm for the Charlottetown accord that he did for the Meech Lake accord, but he took a risk, a significant risk, in committing to that agreement. So the failure to reach a ratification across Canada must have been another disappointment for him, but it wasn't one that would lead him to quit or to back out of his commitment to finding a way to ensure that Quebec could remain within Canada and that francophones within Quebec, Quebecers, would be able to find their rightful place within Confederation.

When he left politics, active politics, it was because of his illness and was a choice that he did not take easily. As an observer around the table watching him deal with very difficult issues, I came to respect his ability not only to understand what everyone else was saying but to try to

bring people together, in a way that I think I came to understand a bit of what he had to do every day as Premier of Quebec.

I suspect one of the greatest tributes made to him on hearing of his death was said by one of his political opponents in Quebec, where he said Robert Bourassa did not have any political enemies, he only had political adversaries. I think that's quite true. Not only did he not have any political enemies, he had many, many political friends, even though there were differences.

All of us in Canada, as well as the people of Quebec, have suffered a great loss with his passing and I join with all members of the House in expressing again our sincere sympathies for the family and to Québécois.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'll begin, Minister, by having to tell you that I was rather shocked yesterday by your callous attitude during the debate that we had initiated on the cuts to the disabled and particularly on the cuts to funding for the special services at home program. I can also tell you, Minister, that your comments that the debate wasn't necessary were an insult to Linda Till and others who depend on the special services at home program and who were watching in the gallery.

But having said that, Minister, I can tell you that I was even more shocked this morning when I received a brown envelope detailing your government's secret plans to cut services for the disabled even further, to change the definition of "disabled" and to gut vocational rehabilitation services. Minister, I want to read to you from an interoffice memorandum where it states, "Ellen Waxman will now work with John Rebow on the new definition of 'disability,' the definition that will be operative across all Ministry of Community and Social Services programs."

Minister, will you now admit that you are indeed breaking your promise not to cut funding to the disabled? Will you admit that you are planning to cut the number of people who qualify for government support by changing the definition of "disabled"? Is this the next step in your attack on the disabled of this province?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): First of all, I did not say that yesterday's debate was unnecessary because I think the issue that we were discussing was extremely important and that issue was the support for those families that choose and can and are able to care for disabled children at home. Secondly, I will not admit that we are doing any of those things because it is not true.

Mrs McLeod: I have in my hand the copy of an interoffice memorandum dated June 25, 1996, in which it states very clearly that Ellen Waxman will now work with John Rebow on the new definition of "disability," and I suggest to you that not only are you attacking the disabled, but you're not being particularly honest about it today. You are secretly working and have been secretly

working on a process to change the definition of "disabled" so that you could save money. The fact that you are not prepared to acknowledge that you are going on with this is not very honest. The fact that you're looking at it all, in my view, Minister, is absolutely unconscionable.

The document contains other revelations of what you are considering that I find absolutely shocking. I want to quote again from the minutes of that meeting in which you are debating the changes proposed to vocational services for the disabled and one that struck me was where it says, "Some may pay on a sliding scale for vocational services." Minister, if you're keeping your promise not to cut the disabled, can you tell me how you would even think about bringing in new user fees for the disabled of this province?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member across the way can choose to turn this into a personal slanging match about whose credibility is what if she wishes. This government has been very clear that the current programs for those who are disabled — to stick them on welfare is not the place they should be. We are working to bring a new program in that will serve them better. We consulted with the community before we've done anything. We are continuing to consult with the community before we do anything, because we want to hear their input, because this program they're currently stuck on is not serving their needs, and I resent very much the implication across the way that my credibility is in question or that my compassion and caring are in question.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, you may resent very much your credibility being called into question; I resent very much the fact that a year ago we were raising the concerns about your ministry's intention to change the definition of "disabled." I grant you were not minister at that point in time. I resent very much the fact that almost a year later we get hold of an interoffice memorandum that says indeed you are not only considering it, you have staff working with other staff on a new definition of "disability." I believe that we and the disabled of this province have a right to openness in terms of what you are considering and what it will mean for the disabled of this province.

I am shocked, Minister, I am absolutely shocked that a government that has already brought in new user fees for drugs for seniors and the disabled in order to help pay for its tax cut is now even considering bringing in user fees for rehabilitation services. This comes from a government whose Premier keeps talking about giving people a hand up and not a handout. I can't think of a single program that does a better job of giving people a hand up than vocational rehabilitation services.

Minister, how can you justify the plans you are putting in place to gut this program, to attack the very people who are looking to get rehabilitation so they can re-enter the workforce? How can you consider charging them user fees?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The only gutting of vocational rehabilitation programs in this province will happen if your friends in Ottawa back out of their agreement on vocational rehabilitation.

We've been very clear that the disabled in this province deserve a better deal than they got. We've consulted

with them to design proposals for a new program. We are continuing to consult with them to design a new program because no decisions have been made. We are working on proposals that will serve them better because they need better service than they got previously.

Mrs McLeod: My second question is also to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The litany of denials following the reality of cut after cut is getting a little hard to deal with. We talked to you on Monday about special services at home cuts, cuts to families from 30% to 70%, in some cases to 100%, as you try and stretch dollars thinner and thinner so they don't meet the needs at all, and you just say, "We haven't really cut programs that affect the disabled."

Yesterday we went over program after program where the disabled have been hit directly or indirectly by your government's cuts and you deny that any of that is really happening: "We haven't made any cuts to the disabled." So today, when we bring forward evidence that you are gutting these programs and that you are considering further gutting of the programs of vocational rehabilitation services that help the disabled, I'm not surprised you deny them.

Minister, the memorandum is absolutely clear. Will you simply tell us today what new definition of "disabled" you are working on? Can you tell us how much your sliding fee is going to be and can you tell us when all of this is going to be effective?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The special services at home program has not been cut. We have not cut the handicapped benefit program. We have reinvested from the Ministry of Health \$170 million into more community services for the disabled. We're going to be reinvesting another \$60 million from the downsizing of facilities. So I resent that we are somehow not paying attention to those issues and to those very important matters.

We've been very clear: We are looking at the program for disabled because we want to remove them from the welfare system. We want to make a new program that will work for them. There are many proposals that have been talked about with the disabled community. There will continue to be proposals talked about with the disabled community because I would much rather ensure that we are getting their advice before we do anything than the advice that I am currently being offered.

Mrs McLeod: I can tell the minister that people in the disabled community have been terrified for the past year that this ministry is indeed looking at a new definition of "disabled." They want to know now what that new definition is so they know what they're going to have to deal with, what they're going to have to fight, as this ministry continues to attack the disabled of this province, but the disabled of this province will be as shocked as we are that the idea of making people pay a fee for their rehabilitation services is something else that may appear in the legislation.

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They will also be rather shocked, when you keep saying you have not cut services to the disabled, when they keep remembering the promise that was made not to cut the services to the disabled, to see very clearly in this memorandum the statement that, "We are having a

discussion of the reduction of services, both through disentanglement and possibly a ceiling on the time that is eligible for service."

Again, Minister, it is clear — we are looking for direct answers — that this says "reduction of services." How can that mean anything other than a cut for the disabled of this province? How can that be anything other than a broken promise to the disabled of Ontario?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We are continuing to consult with the disabled community because we want to design a better program. We want to design a program that not only will suit their needs; we want to design a program that is sustainable and that this province can continue to support and give it the priority that we think it deserves, and I stand by that commitment.

Mrs McLeod: I have one last opportunity to get the minister to address what is clearly the discussion going on in her ministry, and I believe the disabled of this province have a right to know what they are considering. They are considering new user fees. They are clearly considering a redefinition of "disabled." They are considering ceilings on the length of time that the disabled can receive services.

The memo goes on, Minister, the other kinds of things that are being considered, and I'm just going to list some of them: reducing the funding for local transportation, eliminating 100% funding of educational assessments, eliminating funding of support services for post-secondary services, and no funding for part-time and certificate post-secondary programs.

Minister, where is this going to stop? I don't know when your consultation with the disabled is going to begin, but I certainly want to know when you are going to stop gutting the programs for the disabled of this province.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'm sure the honourable member would like to claim that this government has made decisions based on whatever brown envelopes or leaked documents she thinks she has or she may have or she may not have, or came from this civil servant or that civil servant.

We have consulted with the disability community. We will continue to do so, before we make final decisions, before we go out the door with any program, because we want to make sure that it's going to work for the disabled community.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I wanted to ask this question of the Minister of Health, since it concerns health care. Since he's not here today, I will ask it of the Minister of Labour.

Ontario is fortunate to have a province-wide network of occupational health clinics that do outstanding work in preventing workplace disease, illness and accidents. Unfortunately, your government is considering a proposal that would close the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers. The proposal says that the province's health system should simply pick up the burden, should pick up the millions of dollars in costs.

My question to the Minister of Labour: Have you done any impact studies to show the costs on our health care

system that would result from moving away from accident and disease prevention in the workplace and shutting down the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): To the member and leader of the third party, I think your comments are very premature. I am still looking at the report, and there has been absolutely no indication from me or anyone within my ministry that we have any indication of closing the clinics. We have been consulting. In fact, as recently as last week we met again with those who operate the clinics, we have met with the labour leaders, and I can tell you they are getting a very fair hearing.

Our concern is that we focus on the prevention of illness and injury in this province in a very coordinated fashion, and if those clinics indeed can support that strategy and they can support that vision, then certainly we are prepared to continue with the clinics.

Mr Hampton: Once again, it was a simple question. I asked the minister if the government has done any studies which will show how much in terms of cost will be pushed on to the health care system. The minister knows those studies have been done out there. They've been done elsewhere, in other jurisdictions. The minister knows there's a lot of information around that shows that you can save a lot of money if you focus on preventing injury and death in the workplace and if you focus on preventing illness and disease in the workplace. So I would hope you would answer that question. There are a bunch of people who want that question answered.

I was in Sudbury on the weekend and I went to the Weston Bakeries plant in Sudbury, where they won an award for the good work that the workers and the employer have done in that plant with the occupational health clinic in terms of making it a safer place to work and in terms of eliminating some conditions which could contribute to disease. Everyone there agreed that the clinic does absolutely valuable work that the regular health care system is not equipped to do; they simply don't have the expertise, don't have the databases and frankly don't have the focus.

So I want to ask you again, have you looked at the impact studies and are you prepared to guarantee the funding of these clinics rather than passing off more health care costs on to the Ministry of Health?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again to the leader of the third party, I know that what you're saying is indeed true. The people who work at the clinics are very, very proud of all they have accomplished, and they deserve to be. They have certainly made a difference.

I would again emphasize to you that our primary concern is to focus on the prevention of illness and injury in this province. We want to have the the safest, among the safest, workplaces in all the world. We are carefully evaluating the work done by the clinics. That's why it is taking so long. We have asked the clinics to give us the numbers, which they have just very recently agreed to give us, in order that we can determine how cost-efficient it is, and we are carefully studying all that data.

Again, I emphasize to you that we want to make sure we have a coordinated strategy, a coordinated vision, and that we all work together to prevent injury and illness.

Mr Hampton: In fact, that's what the clinics are. The clinics involve a cooperative enterprise between employers and workers and the workers' compensation system, and they do that kind of focused, thoughtful work in the workplace. They do the kind of work, they provide the kind of information, that for example allows mining industry companies to change some of their practices so as to avoid a high ratio of cancers in the workplace. They provide information, for example, to the steel industry and the pulp and paper industry in terms of the kinds of chemical processes to be used or to be amended. They provide the kind of information that helped Weston Bakeries change some of its air exchange systems in Sudbury to avoid high levels of dust in the workplace. That work is already being done by these occupational health clinics.

Why can't you commit to continuing the funding for something that clearly works and clearly has the support of workers and a number of employers across the province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again to the leader of the third party, I would simply repeat what I've said before. We are attempting to put in place a preventive strategy for health and safety in this province. If indeed at the end of our complete review of the work of the clinics it's demonstrated that they do support that vision and that indeed they are willing to work with us and work with the Ministry of Labour and with the Workers' Compensation Board, then obviously they will continue to exist.

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SPORTS FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and it's about the government's continuing agenda of cuts that will affect working people and children. Your ministry's business plan talks about a sports strategy, and we understand there's to be an announcement on Friday. We have already heard from your parliamentary assistant, who made the careless comment that amateur sports groups in Ontario are welfare recipients who have to be taken off the dole. We've heard from him and we suspect that means your strategy will simply be more Conservative cuts — more cuts that will affect children, more cuts that will affect working families all across this province.

Let me put it to you bluntly: Can you assure us today that you will not be making more cuts to amateur sports and recreation and all of those volunteers across the province who run the minor hockey programs, the figure skating programs, the swimming programs, the soccer programs, and who do so much good work with the children and youth across this province? Can you assure us that you won't be cutting those children and youth?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): What I can assure the honourable member of is the fact that we have not had an appropriate sports strategy for the young people of this province for the last 20 years. What I have been doing over the last nine months is undertaking a new strategy so that the funds that are allocated for sports in this province clearly go to the development of the athletes and

the young people in this province, something that has not happened in the last 20 years and certainly not in the last five under his jurisdiction.

Mr Hampton: The minister says there is no strategy. I don't think the minister has been out there and talked to the 700,000 Ontario volunteers who work in amateur sport and recreation across the province, because those 700,000 volunteers would say that there has indeed been a strategy: The government puts in some seed money and that money is used to organize, coordinate and develop the programs for those 700,000 volunteers who provide the program for 4.5 million children, youth and adults across the province.

The minister can have it her way; she can say there's no strategy. I'm saying to the minister there are 700,000 volunteers out there who absolutely disagree with you. What they want to know is, are you going to commit to continue to fund those amateur sports and recreations so they can carry on with delivering those important programs for children and youth across the province? Are you going to make that commitment?

Hon Ms Mushinski: In answer to the honourable member's question, he'll have to wait until Friday when I make my announcement.

Mr Hampton: The habit of this government — and anybody who's been involved with it knows — is to make its announcements Friday afternoon and then hope that, as the weekend passes, nobody will notice and no one will pay any attention. There are a whole bunch of people who are noticing. Donovan Bailey, Silken Laumann, Curt Harnett, people who went to the Olympics and who won medals for Canada, all of whom are from Ontario, have been blunt — very, very blunt — on this issue. If you cut the funding which supports the 700,000 volunteers who go out there and do the work and deliver the services for children and youth all across this province in terms of sports and recreation, you are cutting children and you are cutting youth. You can try to identify it as the sport organizations; the people you are going to cut are going to be the children and the youth.

Let me put it to you this way. Why don't you do the courageous thing for children and youth in this province, why don't you do the right thing for children and youth in this province, and why don't you guarantee the funding which will allow those 700,000 volunteers to get on with their important work? Why don't you do that, Minister?

Hon Ms Mushinski: Perhaps I should correct the record for the leader of the third party, who represented a government that hardly met in its last year. We're meeting on a Friday morning rather than Friday afternoon to make our announcement.

Let me just tell you for the record what my ministry is doing with respect to the funding of sports and recreation in this province. To support provincial sport organizations we have a total budget of \$11.8 million, and the sports strategy, which will clearly show that we're going to be flowing our dollars more effectively for sport and youth in this province, will be announced on October 4, in the morning.

For the community development strategic fund, the budget is \$1.3 million; for the recreation program for

small communities, which is regulation 797, the budget is \$2.4 million; and for the games support program, which funds all of the games both for our youth and for our seniors in this province, the budget is \$700,000. So to suggest that we are not funding sport in this province is inaccurate.

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd be prepared to yield my time to Mr Kells, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, on this subject, but I don't think he wants to come forward.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, he is now, the member for Markham. Minister, your government has decided to prey upon the most vulnerable and the most desperate people in our society, those who are addicted to gambling and those who have little chance, because they're not well connected in the Mike Harris society, of achieving a good deal of wealth. You're doing this by introducing video lottery terminals, or electronic slot machines, in bars and restaurants across Ontario to make up for the revenue you're losing as a result of your tax cut that benefits the rich and the privileged the most.

My colleagues Mr Crozier and Mr Kennedy in the justice committee have requested that in dealing with the legislation they be permitted to know everything there is to know about the circumstances surrounding video lottery terminals in Ontario. So I'm asking you, are you prepared to release to the justice committee, to members of this Legislature, to the news media and to the people of Ontario a secret report entitled Gambling in Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns, 1995? Are you prepared to share that information or are you going to keep it secret?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I don't believe I have that currently. Perhaps the member can pass over what he does have so I can see what he is speaking of.

If you're talking about the greater issue, one of the reasons why we're looking at a number of entertainment types of initiatives — certainly that's something that was carried forward by the previous government. But one of the problems we've had currently in this province is that we don't have a certain amount of accountability to the charities which do participate right now in terms of the roving casinos. I think anyone who's ever participated in municipal government knows of what I speak. Certainly I've seen instances myself where certain charities that have dedicated three or four days of their time to the roving casinos are, at the end of this, really stuck with nothing or even are in the hole. That's a result of not having proper regulations, really tightly monitored systems.

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If we look in terms of where we may go, it's very important for us to have very tight regulatory control, and certainly it's very important to have charities benefit.

Currently, charities benefit, out of the gambling initiatives in this province, probably about \$10 million to \$15 million, in that range. The province right now is seeking to improve that, to make sure that charities do get the benefit of these gambling initiatives, that in fact they are the ones that will benefit from this.

Mr Bradley: That had nothing to do with the question I asked, but I will try again. The Premier and the Minister of Finance, when they were members of the opposition just to the left of me, made some excellent speeches condemning gambling on the part of government. Indeed, the Premier, during the election campaign, indicated that he wanted nothing to do with these gambling revenues. Yet we have a circumstance where you're introducing electronic slot machines to virtually every bar and restaurant in the province of Ontario and you're doing it without the kind of information that we need.

The excuse the Treasurer used when he introduced it was that somehow this was out of control in Ontario, and because so many people were breaking the law, the government had to take it over and had to, itself, introduce video lottery terminals to all of these various sites. That's like saying that since crack cocaine is illegal, the government supposedly should take that over and sell it.

I ask the member, if that is indeed the case, why will you not now release — and I find it hard to comprehend that your staff wouldn't have this available to you — the report called Gambling in Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns, 1995? Is it because this document will not confirm what your government has stated but in fact will justify what the opposition has been saying about the introduction of VLTs across this province?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I would like to repeat a request to the honourable member if he would kindly send over what he does have so I can see of what he is speaking. He's flashing over a photocopied page to me. Certainly it will be more appropriate if I get that.

Secondly, what we do feel is important is that there are proper regulatory controls — Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario? I don't believe this is even a report provided to our ministry.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): How do you know that?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Even by the title, it would certainly imply that it's not one of our ministry's documents.

Returning to what I was saying, what's important to this government is to make sure that what we do is look at things in a very tightly controlled regulatory manner, so we can make sure that whatever happens we do benefit the charities of this province, that we do make sure that the people of this province are protected, and at the same time we do look in terms of how we can support the various sectors of this province that have been asking us, and previous governments, for assistance in making sure that they still remain financially viable. That's clearly the message we got over the hearings.

CHILD CARE

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social

Services and it's with respect, Minister, to the report on child care in Ontario that you wrote which proposes some very radical and may I say massive changes to the child care system in our province.

I think the minister knows from previous conversations we've had a bit about my background in the child care field and that I have a great interest in this, and I think she would predict that I'll find some of her suggestions quite problematic.

I would also suggest to her that members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care have some serious concerns, but I suspect you might dismiss those concerns, myself, because I'm a partisan politician, because your government tends to treat groups like this as special interests and dismiss them.

But I wanted to raise with you some concerns of another person, a Dr Donna Lero, who is with the College of Family and Consumer Studies at the University of Guelph and was a member of your advisory committee, and who wrote to you recently. I just want to read a couple of quotes from her letter to you.

"I have now had some time to read the discussion paper and the accompanying materials more thoroughly. In thinking about the proposed directions, I have asked myself the following questions: If greater accessibility is provided, but to poorer quality care, is that progress? If more child care centres open, but the work of being a child care provider is further devalued, and is even more poorly paid — resulting in poorer quality caregiving, and even higher rates of turnover and instability — will you not do more harm than good?...

"Indeed, with time to read the paper through, I am convinced that some of the more significant recommendations would greatly weaken the quality of care built up so carefully in this province over a long period of time — and destabilize the system in the process.... There is no way I can support proposals that would have such a terrible effect on Ontario's children and families."

Those are pretty powerful words from a woman who is an expert in this field, who was on your advisory panel and who has now written to you and said, "Please take my name off that list; I do not want to be associated with your proposals."

Minister, has this led you to rethink the proposals in that report? Can you tell us why such a renowned expert would think so poorly of the recommendations that you have put forward?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I think as my honourable colleague probably knows, and if she doesn't know, I'll repeat it again here, I have great respect for her background in child care, which I understand spanned many years.

Also, I've met many times with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, because again it's another of the many groups involved in child care that have serious concerns about the system as it exists today and have made many recommendations to me in the many meetings I've had, both formally with that association and with the many individuals as I consulted across the province. That is also another one of the groups that I will continue to meet with over the fall as we do consul-

tation on this report, because I would like to stress that these are proposals. These are proposals that try to reflect the balance of the input we received from across the province when we talked to all the different groups and the parents that were involved in child care.

I'd like to also note that Donna Lero, whose input and advice I was very pleased to receive as a member of my advisory committee — that letter, as you will also note, says that she is still interested in participating and working and giving advice to this government, and I think her expertise has certainly been very, very valuable.

The purpose of those proposals, the purpose of what we're trying to do when we make final decisions as to what we will do with child care, is to take that \$600 million that we have and spend it in a way that will provide more quality child care for more families but in a way that is fair and equitable. I think that's —

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The question is answered.

Hon Mrs Ecker: — the appropriate thing for us to do.

Ms Lankin: Minister, you mentioned that Dr Lero is interested in continuing to advise the government. I guess I want to know, are you taking the advice that she's put forward in this letter?

Many of us would like to advise the government and advise you with respect to your report. I called your ministry to find out how the consultations were going to take place. I was told, "Well, you can send in a letter over the next month." I said, "Surely the minister's going to go out and meet with people?" "Well, the minister will be meeting with a few stakeholders." "Could I see the list of who those are?" "No, that's not public."

Last Friday members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care went to your office. They were met with locked doors and a security guard. Someone said they would set up a meeting with them. As of today, they've not heard back from your office. There are members of the coalition in the gallery today.

Minister, I'd like to get two commitments from you today. There's a whole lot of commitments I'd like from you over a long period of time, but today, two.

1500

One, will you agree over the next week to meet with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care? And when you meet with them, will you agree to discuss what is an appropriate process of public consultation so that we can ensure that not just a handpicked group of people that you're going to meet with privately get to have input into these proposals that are going to have a massive effect on the child care system, but that parents and child care workers and others who are concerned for the wellbeing of our children across this province get a chance to meet publicly with you to talk about your proposals for child care reform?

Hon Mrs Ecker: If the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care had made an appointment, I might have been there Friday when they chose to show up unannounced and demand to see me. As I repeat, I've met with them before, I've met with many individuals within their association in the past several months as I've gone through the consultation. The list of groups that I've met

with before in the back of the report, those are the same groups —

Ms Lankin: Answer the question.

Hon Mrs Ecker: If you'd let me finish, Ms Lankin, I might answer the question — the same group of individuals that we will be meeting with again in the future. I would like to repeat, if the honourable members would like to listen, I am very prepared to meet with all the groups that represent the wide range of child care in this province. There are groups who believe that what this government should be doing is not spending money on child care centres but giving that money to parents so they can choose to stay home and look after their children. There are also groups like the coalition who believe that there must be appropriate child care centres and that those must be funded by the government. So there is a whole range of views out there from many groups. The Ontario Coalition is one of those groups. I remain willing to meet with them as I've met with them before and I will continue to meet with these groups as we develop our final proposals.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, as you may be aware, the new Casino Rama has opened this summer, by all accounts to great success. However, I understand that with the increased traffic in the area there has been a great concentration of traffic problems in the Rama area. What is your ministry doing to try and resolve the traffic problems in the vicinity of the Rama casino?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I would like to thank the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay for the question. I think it is a good question and certainly the Ministry of Transportation is aware of the traffic problems that are being created because of the casino opening at Highway 12 at the Atherley Narrows. The ministry has been working very closely with Ontario Provincial Police, Casino Rama and the Ontario Casino Corp to find ways to minimize the congestion while working on a permanent solution to the traffic problems. We are carrying out improvements to major intersections and we also have changeable message signs which have been installed. We also have, through the casino association, an offsite parking lot so at least some of the congestion is going to be alleviated.

One other thing I'd like to share with you: GO Transit, along with CN Rail and Casino Rama, have started a new train service to the casino which has been well received, I might add, and certainly provides a convenient alternative for the people who do not want to drive. By leasing the trains to CN at times when they would be ordinarily just sitting there doing nothing, GO Transit is maximizing its resources. I certainly would like to commend CN and GO Transit and the casino association for creating the Rama express.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Palladini: The honourable members across the room here are not too enthusiastic about these concerns, but I want to just say that we will continue to

work together to ensure that the reconstruction of Highway 12 will begin in the spring of 1997 and the improvements will include a twinning of the Atherley Narrows bridge —

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The question has been answered.

Hon Mr Palladini: — and also highway widening. We hope to have this in place by early 1999.

Mr Grimmett: A supplementary question: The cost of these repairs —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Grimmett: — are they being shared by the casino?

Hon Mr Palladini: Mr Speaker, I apologize. Would you ask the member to repeat the question? I was not able to hear the question.

Mr Grimmett: Will the cost of these road improvements be shared by the casino?

Hon Mr Palladini: I believe the casino operators would be willing to contribute to these improvements and I assure the member that this is being discussed as we go along.

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): My question is to the Minister of Transportation and it will only take a simple yes. Your stated plans are to eliminate the service of driver examination centres in Hamilton Mountain, Welland, Niagara Falls, Cayuga, Midland, Strathroy, St Thomas, Cambridge, Trenton, Port Hope, Winchester and, in my riding, Leamington. I've written to you and I've spoken with you about these closures. Will you review the information I've sent to you and consider that this valuable service be continued for the residents of Essex South?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the member for the question. Yes, he has written to me for further consideration of the request his constituents have made to him. I've even talked to the honourable member about the situation, about what we are faced with. I concur that we must be able to deliver services to the people of Ontario, but at the same time we must also be able to utilize the facilities we have in place to deliver those services. There are facilities throughout the province of Ontario that are not being maximized. Unfortunately, this is the situation we find ourselves in, and until we can see that we can maximize these service deliveries, we are going to have to make decisions that are not very favourable and not very easy to be done. I will make sure I get back to the honourable member with my final decision.

Mr Crozier: That surprises me, because the office has been advised that it's closing at the end of October. I appreciate the fact that you will get back to me. Let me advise you of this: The criterion that you've used, and yet haven't defended, is that the centres have to be within 50 kilometres. This centre is in excess of 50 kilometres away from Windsor and/or Chatham.

I've asked how, with one office in Windsor, you can serve more than 300,000 constituents. You gave me an

answer at one point that Leamington has only 14,700 people and you quoted the source of your information. This centre serves an immediate area of more than 40,000 and we have many people coming out of Windsor to use it. There are five driving schools in the area which will be affected by your decision.

I will ask you to do this when you get back to me with your final answer: Please look beyond the percentages and look at the people, and look beyond the statistics and look at the service. Will you do that? Because the people in Essex South think you are a person who will listen, and I hope you will take these arguments into consideration.

Hon Mr Palladini: Again, I want to thank the member for his question. We have given the member certain information on how we might have arrived at some of these closures. Population is one part of the entity; travel is another part of the entity. At the same time, we also have to take a look at the facility and how it is being utilized. Certain facilities are not being maximized to their full utilization — in other words, running at 50%, 60%, 70% of the capacity they're able to do — versus other issuers within the same range. Therefore, we have to make a decision on closing certain centres; also because of the fact that we are able to get out of a lease, which is possibly expiring at a more reasonable date. These are decisions.

One of the things I want to say to the honourable member is that we are committed to making sure that we are going to do better for less, but I'm also saying to the honourable member that just because we are closing certain centres doesn't mean the services available are going to be fewer. On the contrary, I anticipate better service.

1510

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Correctional Services. It is common knowledge that James Lonnee was placed in a segregation cell with another youth, a youth who has now been charged with his murder. After this tragic incident, you agreed that youth should not be doubled up in segregation cells. Did you take action on this? Did you send out a directive prohibiting the double bunking of youth in one segregation cell?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I indicated earlier, when this tragic incident occurred, that I'm not going to get into details related to the incident, how it occurred and what actions the government may be contemplating, given the fact that there is an ongoing police investigation and that there will be an internal ministry investigation following completion of the police investigation.

Ms Lankin: Maybe you misunderstood my question. It was not with respect to James Lonnee; it was with respect to youth who are still alive in the custody of your provincial institutions and what steps you're taking to assure them. The Premier, in answer to a question in this House around youth in young offenders institutions, said "Let me assure you that I have taken what steps I believe

are appropriate to ensure that the safety of the children is utmost in our minds. I think the parents can have utmost confidence in that." So it's bizarre to hear you say you're not going to tell us what actions you've taken to protect youth at this point in time.

Let me tell you something about what's going on in your ministry right now. Last night at Metro West Detention Centre there were eight youths being housed in five segregation cells. That obviously means that three of these cells were doubled up — double bunking.

From reviewing your ministry's own annual report on the isolation of youth, the most common reasons for youth to be put in segregation are for assaults on peers, suicide prevention and crisis management. Your own policy on segregation sets out that the purpose for this is to separate them from others.

The system failed James Lonnee. You said several days after his death that youth should not be doubled up in segregation cells. We know it's too late for us to do anything to help James Lonnee, but it's not too late for us collectively to take steps to protect other youth in the system. In view of the murder of James Lonnee and your commitments and the Premier's commitments, will you commit today that no youth will be double bunked while in a segregation cell from this day forward?

Hon Mr Runciman: That policy is being reviewed. There are situations where it may be appropriate for double bunking, if it's a suicide question, even in segregation. Indeed, we are reviewing that, but we have some real limitations with respect to segregation of young offenders. I've talked about those in the House before. These are not new. They've been around the system for some time, and we're attempting to address them.

Some of these problems are not going to be solved overnight, but at least we are taking the tough decisions. We've made a decision with respect to training. The former government was advised to deal with that. They declined to deal with that. We are restructuring the jail system so that we can move young offenders out of adult facilities. We're doing that; the former government declined to take that tough decision.

I thank the member for raising an issue last week with respect to Vanier. We investigated that situation and found out that young offenders in that area — and we believe it's in violation of the Young Offenders Act — were coming into contact with adults, being fed by adults. We have stopped that policy. That policy was instituted two years ago by the NDP government. I ask this member, where was she around the cabinet table when that decision was taken?

We are doing what's right, we are doing what's responsible and, finally, but most important, we are doing what's long overdue.

VEHICLE EMISSION TESTING

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. Air quality is an issue which is of great concern to all the residents of Ontario and certainly to us in southwestern Ontario. I was interested to read this morning that the pilot study that's been going on here in the GTA on vehicle tailpipe

emissions will be drawing to a close at the end of October. All of us know that vehicle emissions are major contributors to the quality of our air. Could you please inform the House, as the minister responsible for the environment, what options you are looking at for reducing vehicle emissions in Ontario?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'm glad that members of the government back bench are interested in the environment. I wondered when I was going to get a question in this House.

I was down in Windsor last Thursday and met with the Windsor advisory committee on air emissions. They were very concerned as well in their community about this very significant problem we have in Ontario. Health Canada estimates that we have some 1,800 Ontarians who died prematurely due to the bad air we have in this province. That's why I'm looking at a vehicle emission testing program which, quite frankly, was first thought of by my predecessor, the Honourable Brenda Elliott. I'm going to follow on her initiation and put this program into place.

The goal of this program is to provide vehicle owners with a convenient, economical and practical testing for their vehicles. I believe that if we take some positive steps, we then can request some of our border states to take some remedial steps as well. I'm happy to address this problem head on. It hasn't been addressed by any previous governments in the past and I will look forward to doing these kinds of things to improve the air quality of Ontario.

Mr Carroll: Obviously all our emission problems are not generated in our province; a lot of them are a result of what happens in the northern American states. What plans have you to deal with that particular problem that originates outside of our jurisdiction?

Hon Mr Sterling: As I mentioned in my answer to the previous question, I believe that if we lead by example in this regard, then we can go to the border states, where over 50% of the problem is created for Ontario, and say to them: "We're doing our part. How about you doing something on your part?" I've already met with the Secretary of the Environment for the state of Pennsylvania and discussed with him the needs that we have in this province to reach some understanding of how we benefit, unfortunately, from their air pollution. I have asked our federal minister, Mr Marchi, to act aggressively on this issue. It appeared earlier this month that he was not doing that. I will continually be on his back to make certain that he is pressing this issue with his people in the United States. Further, I intend to meet with other people in the border states to impress upon them our concern over this issue. This is a big issue for the people of Ontario and particularly for the people of Chatham-Kent and the Windsor area.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I have a real question for the Minister of Environment this time. A study was conducted in Hamilton-Wentworth by the Ministry of Energy and Environment. In this study, an alarming conclusion was drawn regarding the levels of small particle pollution known as PM-10s in Hamilton's

air. This study revealed that 20 to 25 deaths a year are directly attributed to this pollutant. This study was confirmed by your chief air quality assessment officer, Dr Dennis Corr, who said: "People are dying from air pollution. There is no doubt the level of particulate pollution we're experiencing in Hamilton is causing health effects." Mr Slater, your district director, also said: "This particle is not under any ministry regulations. It is causing serious effects in Hamilton-Wentworth."

I wrote to the Premier August 15. We have not had a response from you to this issue. It is very serious. It is important, particularly to the people of the east end, which I represent. Will you commit today to, first of all, immediately bring in regulations to control this particle and put standards for industry? Second, will you commit today for your ministry to carry out a health study in the east end of Hamilton to see the impact and the fallout from this pollution particle?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'm very concerned about this particular issue and I've had some initial briefings on it. We have in the past done extensive testing in the Hamilton area with regard to this problem and I'm aware of it. We're working on a solution to it and I undertake to the member that we'll do everything in our power to arrest this particular air pollutant.

1520

Mr Agostino: Simply, that is not good enough. This is the ministry that has gutted regulations. Your ministry shut down the environmental testing unit in the east end of Hamilton. The monitoring station in the east end that monitors environmental particulates in the air was shut down by your ministry a month and a half ago in the area most affected. For you, Minister, to simply say, "We're doing the best we can," is not good enough. This is not a lobby group. This is not some sort of outside group that carries out the study. This was your own ministry that said 20 to 25 people a year are dying in my community as a result of this particular pollutant that is in the air which your ministry has the responsibility to control.

Minister, I'm not looking for some sort of feel-good answer today. I'm looking for a specific answer to a specific question. Once again, I urge you and ask you, will you commit to immediately bring in regulations to control PM-10, the particulate in question, and will you commit to carrying out a health study for the east end of Hamilton so my residents can be assured the proper precautions will be taken care of and that your ministry's doing everything it can? Please give me a direct answer. This is not a political question; this is serious. It is dangerous to the people of Hamilton. What will you do and when will you do this?

Hon Mr Sterling: We are working with the federal government to develop standards for this particular item. I do treat it as a serious item, as I do treat all environmental problems, particularly when we have alarming reports as the member has said. That is why I'm cautious in terms of answering these questions as to what I can truly achieve over a short period of time.

Therefore, I would only say to the member that we are developing standards with regard to this particular kind of air pollutant with the federal government so that we will have a good standard, a standard we can stand

behind and a standard which can be achievable and we can find out those who are causing it and stop them from causing it.

SERVICE OF THE SPEAKER

The Speaker (Hon Ed Doyle): The time for question period has expired. Before we get on to motions, I wonder if members of the House would kindly bear with me for just a moment. There are a few things that I would like to say.

When I first accepted this position that was so kindly offered to me a week ago, there had been a rumour that there was an agreement between the party leaders that I would be resigning at the end of a week and today I would like to set the record straight. The rumour is true and I'll be stepping down at 12:01 on October 3, so I've stretched it a minute into the next day. That's to ensure that should things go beyond 6 o'clock tonight, there'll be somebody to cover.

I want to say a few other things before I go too, if you will indulge me for just a moment. I would like to thank the House leaders who were so kind to me. To David Johnson, to Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, the member for Algoma, Bud Wildman, these two gentlemen I see in the hallways and we stop and we joke with each other and I have a great deal of respect for them and I thank them for their nomination and I truly appreciate it.

I may be called out of order for what I'm about to say next —

Interjection: By whom?

The Speaker: Well, I'll rule in my own favour — but I would also like to thank the Clerk, Mr DesRosiers, Alex, Debbie and now Donna, who's been here; they've all been a great help to me in this week that has gone by. I thank you very much for all your assistance and your confidence. Thank you very much.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, might I just say, on behalf, I believe, of everybody in this House, our sincere appreciation to you for your excellent service over this past week, certainly in somewhat difficult circumstances on very short notice. To accept this challenging position is certainly a reflection on yourself and I know that every member would wish to express appreciation for your leadership, your dignity, your grace, your good humour, your natural approach, being attentive. I've noticed how attentive you've been to all the members on both sides of the House as they've spoken and I'm sure that the members appreciate that.

You haven't been too tough on the members, I might say. However, I think the proceedings have improved somewhat under your direction and you did attempt to make some difficult rulings on points of order, as I can recall, and on points of personal privilege.

There's probably great relief here today among many of the candidates for this position that indeed you are stepping down. I've heard a draft Ed movement rumbling through the chamber here, but too late.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): Never too late, Ed.

Hon David Johnson: Never too late.

I would only say that I'm sure those running for the position, and particularly the successful candidate tomorrow, would be well served having watched you in action over this past week. Thank you very much for your service.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On behalf of the official opposition, the Liberal Party, I would like to echo the comments of the government House leader. You were very kind to take this position for that short period of time. I can tell you that there was no question among the three House leaders when your name came forward as a possibility. I know it was a surprise to you. You were approached by the government House leader, but it was with the full concurrence and enthusiasm of the two opposition House leaders.

We appreciate what you have done. It's extremely difficult when all of us sit in the House and think we know the rules, but none of us has to apply them until we're in the chair. I know you were ably assisted by those at the table and others.

We appreciate your wonderful sense of humour in the chair, your humility which you have demonstrated on so many occasions, and we are proud to have had you as our Speaker, even if it was only for a period of a week. We hope that if not a portrait, at least a Polaroid photograph will be placed in the hallways of this Legislature. I certainly would not object to your keeping the robes, if indeed you saw fit to do so.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On behalf of our caucus, I want to express our thanks as well for your taking the chair in this period over the last week and for the grace with which you've exercised your duties.

As I listened to and participated in the standing ovation, I was trying to analyse what exactly prompted many members of the House to stand and applaud. I'm sure most of us, if not all, were applauding the way you've held yourself, handled your position over the last week. I suspect there were a few who may be candidates for this position who were applauding because you said you weren't going to run again, and I suspect many of them were doing that with some relief, because you have done very, very well.

I was thinking also that if you can get a standing ovation after sitting in this chair for three days, imagine what you might have achieved if you'd be here for three years. The problem is it might have had the exact opposite effect. I know you feel the concern that many who aspire to your office should be thinking about seriously over this evening and tomorrow morning.

I want to again thank you for taking this position. I have some sympathy with those who take interim positions. I have some experience in that regard. I want to compliment you particularly on your genuine interest in the proceedings of the House before you while you were responsible for applying the rules and for your self-deprecating humour, which I think has stood you in good stead as you've dealt with issues you didn't expect to deal with only a few days before. So again thank you on behalf of all members of the House for doing this for the assembly.

1530

The Speaker: I wonder if I can indulge you for one more moment, please, before I recognize my colleague from Hamilton Centre. I would like to correct a mistake I made to ensure that people don't think I'm pulling a doublecross here. I gave the wrong time for my resignation, so I'll correct that as being 12:01 am, October 3. We want to make sure we don't hang on a little longer.

To the new Speaker, I wish Godspeed. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Thank you, Speaker Doyle. I speak on behalf of the citizens of the same community, yours and mine: Hamilton-Wentworth. Much has been said on behalf of all the members here, but I want to tell you on behalf of the close to half a million people who live in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth the great pride you have brought all of us in the short but important time you've sat in that chair. There is great pride.

Whether one is a New Democrat, Tory or Liberal, we have benefited by virtue of your ascension to that position, the job you've done and the grace and humour you've brought to this position. I want it in Hansard and on the record forever that the people of Hamilton-Wentworth, sir, are very proud of the job you have done and look forward to a much longer, distinguished career as you spend your time in politics.

The Speaker: I take it there are no motions, so are there — oh, there are more people. The Chair recognizes — I'm sorry, but I believe Mr Bartolucci was first. The Chair recognizes the member for Sudbury.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): That's why I really like him as the Speaker. You have a vision of the back row, and I really appreciate it.

The Speaker: I can hear from back there quite well too.

Mr Bartolucci: Are we in petitions now?

The Speaker: I believe that to be correct.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It is the first of many, I'm sure.

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructur-

ing Commission's recommendation to close two of Sudbury's hospitals."

I proudly affix my name to this petition. I'm sure it will be one of many about the same item.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I continue to support these petitioners by adding my name to theirs.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present two petitions from my constituency presented to me by Christopher Snider and Donna Dubreil, which read as follows:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

GARDE D'ENFANTS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) : J'ai ici une pétition adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

"Attendu que des soins de garderies de haute qualité contribuent d'une manière significative au développement sain de tous les enfants ;

"Attendu que des recherches ont prouvé que les éducateurs d'enfants qui sont bien rémunérés et qui ont de bonnes conditions de travail fournissent des soins pour enfants de très haute qualité ;

"Attendu que le meilleur système de garderies pour les enfants en est un qui est accessible, abordable et réglementé à l'égard de la qualité ;

"Attendu que les récents compressions de garderies déstabilisent entièrement le système de garderies en Ontario,

"Nous, les soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit :

"Que tous les financements publics pour les soins de garderies soient remis en place, incluant les contributions, les fonds capitaux et la subvention opérationnelle ;

"Que tous les présents engagements en ce qui a trait à la subvention de salaires, contributions pour l'égalité salariale et toute autre programme de financement et/ou politique qui maintient la stabilisation des soins de haute qualité pour les enfants et les familles de la province de l'Ontario soient maintenus ;

"Que des audiences publiques soient tenues dans le cadre de la revue des services de garderies."

J'y ajoute ma signature.

MANDATORY INQUESTS

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario has decided to scrap mandatory inquests as a result of fatalities in the mining and construction industry; and

"Whereas this unprecedented and callous decision sets workplace safety back 20 years,

"We, the undersigned, request that the Solicitor General, Bob Runciman, on behalf of all workers in the mining and construction industry, reverse his decision to remove mandatory inquests from the Coroners Act of Ontario."

This petition has been signed by 3,500 workers who live in northeastern Ontario. It was organized by Mr Wayne Fraser, who is the area coordinator for a number of local steel unions right across northeastern Ontario, and I want to thank him for his initiative. I have signed my name to this and I agree with the petitioners entirely.

SALE OF AMMUNITION

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): These petitions concerning ammunition regulations, which are supported and are being distributed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, read as follows:

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the ammunition

control act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records produced as a result of the provisions of Bill 181 cannot reasonably be used to track criminals and are in many locations across Ontario where such records are kept insecurely stored and thus available for criminal use as a shopping list of homes with firearms; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, those who are most affected by the legislation; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the illegal use of ammunition,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal the ammunition control act, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against those who criminally misuse firearms and ammunition."

I support this petition and therefore affix my signature to it.

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

1540

HEALTH CARE

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): I have a petition from some of my constituents to the Legislative Assembly.

"We, the undersigned, are residents of Rayside-Balfour. We are concerned with the erosion of health care services in our community. A recent cap on physician billing to OHIP has resulted in the loss of the registered nurse at the Chelmsford Medical Centre. This fact, coupled with the recent loss of a family physician in the town of Chelmsford, will mean that many residents will not be able to see a physician when needed, if at all.

"We understand the difficulties in recruiting new physicians to the town, especially in light of the cutbacks, and therefore suggest that measures be taken by the town or by the province to maintain the services we presently have.

"We hope that arrangements may be made to either except the billing cap in this instance or make provisions to pay for the services of the registered nurse outside of the billing cap.

"Many of the residents of Rayside-Balfour are without medical service and we encourage you not to let the situation get worse."

I have affixed my signature to it.

FAMILY SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the employers involved in sending out family support plan payments of the garnisheed wages of the payers have 30 days to send those payments to the family support plan offices; and

"Whereas the recipients of those family support plan payments (single mothers and children) face severe financial hardships such as eviction, food bank visitation, medical costs etc during the 30 days waiting for the arrival of those payments;

"I, Jody Wilson, and the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To reduce the 30-day response time of the employers tending the family support plan payments to three to seven working days from the time the paycheque shows the garnishee of the wages, so that the recipients (women and children) can plan their living expenses on a more appropriate and regular basis and lessen the fear of financial hardship and possibly eliminate crises."

This is signed by a large number of my constituents, mostly from the Elliot Lake area.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Mr Speaker, as you know, this coming Friday, October 4, the Health Services Restructuring Commission will be coming back to Thunder Bay to render what they're calling their final verdict in terms of the restructuring and the hospital closures in Thunder Bay. All through this summer we've been collecting petitions and letters, and I've got a pile several feet high here, many thousands of petitions. I will just read one of them, if I may.

"To the Legislative Assembly:

"We do not believe you have made the best choice for the health care system in northwestern Ontario. We are deeply concerned with the speed and the amount of bed reductions you have dictated.

"We are also concerned with your intention to close three hospitals out of the five currently operating in Thunder Bay. These hospitals, although seeming to be concentrated, are in fact providing essential regional service. By reducing the total number of beds from 954 to 526, and in the process eliminating psychiatric and chronic care hospitals, the 428-bed reduction will leave the lives of our families, friends and ourselves at risk.

"If it was your intention to act on behalf of the interests of the public, we, as members of that public, ask you to reflect upon your conscience, for you will be ultimately responsible for the error in this decision."

I am proud to sign this petition.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a petition signed by 573 constituents of Essex South and it's with regard to rent controls in general and those controls that are being lifted with regard to mobile parks specifically. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has decided to replace the current rent control program, and with their proposed tenant package they are cancelling the Rental Housing Protection Act and are allowing a landlord, once a unit becomes vacant, to negotiate an incoming tenant's rent without regulatory restriction;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Mike Harris government re-examine its proposed abolishment of the rent control program as we do not agree with the changes that the government wishes to make, and that the mobile home owners should have separate consideration."

I support this petition, and in support, I affix my signature to it.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I'd like to use this opportunity to read another one of the petitions that's come forward throughout the summer regarding the Health Services Restructuring Commission and the decision to close hospitals in Thunder Bay.

"Members of the Legislative Assembly:

"We are writing to voice our strong objections to what you plan to do to health care in Thunder Bay. It is unacceptable to take \$40 million a year away from our hospitals and leave us without the services we need. Reinvesting the dollars you save in Thunder Bay somewhere else won't give us access to hospital care at home. Health care is critical to our community. I ask that you reconsider your decision. You must not leave us with so little."

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr Martiniuk from the standing committee on administration of justice presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de*

bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

I believe we have also a motion on the part of Mr Laughren from Nickel Belt.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 19th report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Do you wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): This is simply the report of the committee that met this morning dealing with government appointments.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Mr Harnick moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to establish the Family Responsibility Office, protect the interests of children and spouses through the strict enforcement of support orders while offering flexibility to responsible payors and make consequential amendments to certain statutes / Projet de loi 82, Loi créant le Bureau des obligations familiales, visant à protéger les intérêts des enfants et des conjoints grâce à l'exécution rigoureuse des ordonnances alimentaires tout en offrant une certaine souplesse aux payeurs responsables, et apportant des modifications corrélatives à des lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TAX CREDITS AND ECONOMIC STIMULATION ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 CRÉANT DES CRÉDITS D'IMPÔT ET VISANT À STIMULER L'ÉCONOMIE

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to provide Co-operative Education and Film Industry Tax Credits, to create Economic Growth, to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget and to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister of Finance / Projet de loi 70, Loi créant des crédits d'impôt pour l'éducation coopérative et l'industrie cinématographique, favorisant la croissance économique, mettant en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996 et modifiant des lois dont l'application relève du ministre des Finances.

Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick): I am pleased to speak to the third reading of Bill 70. I move it and it's the Tax Credits and Economic Stimulation Act, 1996.

This bill implements key measures of our 1996 budget to restore confidence, create jobs and spur economic growth. Bill 70 has three important goals: It aims to assist employers hiring post-secondary students in co-op education programs, to help out the television and film industry, and to encourage small and medium-sized businesses that need new sources of capital to expand and create jobs.

1550

Our college and university students are the future of this province. We must ensure they have enhanced employment opportunities that allow them to lead productive and independent lives. By combining academic studies and work experience, Ontario's cooperative education programs benefit both students and employers. It gives students real world experience and market-relevant skills. It makes it easier, I feel, for students to make the transition from school to the workplace and it helps students earn money to pay for their own education. It also provides real economic benefits to employers and improved partnerships between businesses and educational institutions.

At present, more than 20,000 students are enrolled in co-op programs in Ontario's colleges and universities. However, there is a shortage of co-op placements and this is why we are creating a cooperative education tax credit. This refundable tax credit will provide employers with a tax credit of up to 10% of the cost of hiring a student in a recognized co-op program.

The credit is capped at a maximum of \$1,000 per co-op placement. It will encourage employers to provide more co-op opportunities to meet existing demand. Students will benefit from more placement opportunities. Because of the current difficulty in placing students, universities and colleges have been reluctant to expand their co-op programs. This tax credit will also encourage those universities and colleges to expand such programs.

The tax credit will also encourage private sector employers to play a more active role in Ontario's education system. The skilled graduates of co-op programs make Ontario a more competitive environment and they certainly attract investment to the province.

Bill 70 also assists Ontario's film and television industry. Ontario has become one of North America's major film production centres. Our highly developed film and television industry has an infrastructure that attracts major film and television productions to the province. It provides skilled jobs for many Ontarians and generates in

excess of \$500 million annually in production activity in this province alone.

However, the industry faces aggressive competition from other jurisdictions. The bill implements our budget commitment to provide a film and tax credit to maintain Ontario's competitive advantage. It will also create more jobs in this highly skilled, knowledge-based sector of Ontario's economy. This refundable film tax credit will equal 15% of eligible labour costs. The tax credit rate will be doubled for first-time filmmakers on the first \$240,000 of eligible labour costs. We are giving first-time filmmakers a bigger tax credit because we recognize that the industry's high-risk nature makes this very advantageous. New filmmakers without a track record often face difficulties securing financing.

The tax credit will provide stable and predictable support to the film and television industry. This in turn will assist the industry in planning and developing long-term strategic alliances and securing financing. We are taking this action to ensure that Ontario remains competitive and a major player in the North American film and television production industry.

A large share of Ontario's new jobs come from new and growing businesses. Ontario's private sector created 89,000 new net jobs in the first eight months of 1996. These businesses need sources of capital from investors who believe in their potential and are prepared to maintain their investments until that potential is realized.

Labour-sponsored investment funds were launched to provide capital to small and medium-sized businesses that couldn't raise financing in more traditional ways. The response by individual investors to the labour-sponsored investment funds has been greater than expected. Investors have placed more than \$1 billion into these funds and they have kickstarted this important sector of the economy.

This bill will ensure that capital raised by labour-sponsored funds goes to Ontario entrepreneurs that need it. We are targeting small businesses that are not yet big enough to raise capital on the stock market. Bill 70 will also require that 10% of a fund's capital must be invested into small companies with no more than \$5 million in assets and no more than 50 employees. Of the capital required to be invested, only 15% will be allowed for investments in public companies. These measures will ensure that more of the money is used for the original purpose of the labour-sponsored funds, which is investing in small business.

There are also concerns about the time it takes for the capital to be invested in business. At present, the rules require that capital be invested within 24 months of a fund's year-end. This lag from the time the labour-sponsored fund receives the money to the time it is invested is too long. The money is not helping Ontario business as quickly as it should. This bill would require that 50% of the money collected by the end of the RRSP season must be invested by December 31 of the same year and 70% must be invested by December 31 of the following year. If these rules are not met, the bill allows for suspending the fund's ability to issue certificates for tax credit. These measures will ensure that labour-spon-

sored funds make investments in small and medium-sized businesses and that they do it more quickly.

Bill 70 will help create an environment where business can create jobs and opportunities here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Questions or comments?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I'm confused. The member's colleague the member for Brampton South is quoted in the press as saying that sports organizations, which depend on volunteerism, something I thought this government supported — at least it says it does — were welfare bums and needed to be taken off the dole. He hasn't gotten up and said he was misquoted; I hope he was. On the one hand we have the member for Brampton South saying that these volunteer organizations that are so important for providing opportunities and coaching for youth and children in the province are welfare buns and need to be taken off the dole, and now the government is moving forward with a program to provide for tax credits for business. I'm just waiting for the member for Brampton South to get up and say that he's opposed to this because he doesn't think business should be on the dole.

Perhaps the parliamentary assistant who is carrying this bill could explain this apparent contradiction between what she has just said and what her colleague from Brampton South is quoted as saying about another very important activity in this province, particularly as it relates to the youth of Ontario. I'm very cognizant of what a very important role model for youth in the province, Donovan Bailey, has had to say about anticipated cuts to recreation in this province and how he says that if he had faced this when he was just starting out, he might not have achieved what he has for Canada and for himself.

Surely we should be supporting co-op education, we should be supporting our cultural industries, we should be encouraging them, but we also should be encouraging recreation for young people in this province.

1600

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is a bill of great importance to members of this House. The problem is that it has aspects of it, as the Speaker should know, that are very detrimental to people. One of the successes we have in this province is the film industry, and one reason it has been successful — there are a couple of reasons — is that the dollar has been very favourable. That has encouraged people from the United States, for instance, to come here and be involved in the making of films. You notice that all the time. But for Canadian filmmakers, for our own people, it has been the incentive that has been provided in a financial way by the government of Ontario.

This is a winner. I suspect that some of the members, particularly from Metropolitan Toronto, know this has been a winner and must be very concerned when the government begins to scale back a program of this kind to make it less generous, because the multiplier effect of the expenditures in filmmaking is exceedingly important to everyone in this province.

But, of course, as my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, the Liberal critic for finance, has

said on many occasions, this is all to address the tax cut of 30%, which largely benefits the richest people in this province, the most privileged people in this province. Because of that tax cut, we have had to cut back in other areas that are very productive, that are going to generate funds for this province. I know my colleague will be speaking a little later on and will be discussing this matter at some length, but I think the government is making a major mistake when it becomes less generous in its investment in a field which is a known success internationally. It has helped our artists, it has helped our cultural people and it has been very productive in terms of the funds it generates for the coffers of the province of Ontario.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I wonder if the member opposite from the government can explain in the time she's going to have afterwards a bit of an explanation as to part of this bill in regard to allowing public money to be deposited in foreign institutions. I note that in the bill under part VI, I believe it is, there is a provision that's going to allow the province of Ontario to take public dollars and deposit those dollars into other foreign banking institutions. I would take it that's for the purposes of borrowing and making payment back. If not, I would like to have some clarification on that, as well as the whole question — I will try to get into it if I have an opportunity to debate later — of the privatization of the collections of unpaid debt. I take it the government is, through this bill, moving forward with allowing private collection agencies to try to collect unpaid money to the province of Ontario, and maybe the member opposite could elaborate a bit as to what her thoughts are on that.

The Acting Speaker: The parliamentary assistant, you have two minutes to reply.

Ms Bassett: First of all, I want to thank the honourable members from Algoma and St Catharines for their support of the initiatives we are taking in order to create more jobs in the film industry and to stimulate an industry that has become famous in Ontario and around North America in terms of the expertise of its workforce and the number of jobs it professes to create. I thank them for that.

In terms of the mechanics of this bill, they are in the process of being worked out. I will get back to the honourable member and fill in the details as this moves its way through. This is setting the parameters of what we're going to be doing with the bill. The aim is to create jobs and stimulate business.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 70, which is a government tax bill. Firstly, to put it in some perspective for the public and ourselves, let's recognize the policy of the government: It is to cut the revenue by \$5 billion. They've told the province of Ontario that we have an enormous problem with the deficit and I think the people of Ontario accept that. In fact, I think the people of Ontario are prepared to deal with it. We have this huge problem with the deficit, but at the same time the government says we can afford to cut taxes by \$5 billion — by the way, that's almost 10% of our revenue — and who gets that tax cut but the wealthiest people in this province.

The government is asking people to close hospitals and have larger classes. They're telling the seniors in this province that they must pay a user fee on drugs, something the government said before the election it would not do. Why is that? Why are all these huge cuts taking place? Without question it is to fund the tax cut. If the deficit is such a big problem, and I think most people accept it is a huge problem, how can it be that we can afford a \$5-billion tax cut that will give \$5,000 more to someone making \$150,000 in this province?

If you are a senior with very low income, you're going to have to go out and pay a user fee on your drugs, something the government said it would never do. We are seeing across this province hospital after hospital being closed, driven by a cut of almost 20% by this government in funding for hospitals. We are seeing, without a question of a doubt, in every school board in this province larger classes this September than we saw last year. We saw the family support plan in absolute chaos.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: I don't know what the member's saying across the way, but he's barracking because they may not like the fact that they campaigned on a platform of saying to the seniors of this province that there would be no user fee on drugs. No user fee, no copayment: That was a solemn promise and you broke that promise. You said to the parents of this province, "We are going to protect classrooms," and across this province, in fact tonight, there will be thousands of parents going to schools, finding out that their children are in substantially larger classrooms than they were in a year ago. Why? Because this government has chosen to cut support for public education, for our elementary and secondary schools. You said you were going to cut your support by a 25% cut in our education support. We found that the family support program was in chaos.

The reason I raise all this is that this is a bill that is part of this government's fiscal plan. I will say to the public that for the first year and a half of the Mike Harris government Ontario was prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt. They won the election; they had a majority. Ontario wanted change. Now we are seeing the cold, hard face of that change. I would say to the people of Ontario it's time now to let Mike Harris know what you think of that change. Believe me, Mike Harris is not listening to the opposition. He says he won the election, he will do what he wants. I would just say to the people of Ontario that it's time to let your voices be heard.

We're dealing with this particular bill and I would say it highlights three or four significant concerns about this government. I will take the ones the previous member mentioned. One is on the film industry. Here is an industry that has truly grown dramatically in Ontario. Yes, it causes the odd problem with traffic in Toronto, but I am glad to see that traffic problem because I see a terrific industry that is here because we've got a lot of talented people, we have a lot of support here in Ontario for it but we also have a program designed to attract and encourage that. This program, let's acknowledge it, puts at risk that entire program. It cuts it by a third; it cuts support for the film industry by a third and, I say to the government, that's a risk. You are putting at risk a terrific growth industry, one of our best growth industries.

1610

I also highlight that this is a government that has said it is going to cut its support for business. I would say that's risky. The government said in its budget document, "In my opinion, most business subsidies don't create lasting jobs." That's a high-risk strategy.

I went to listen the other day to the governor of Pennsylvania, who was in town, a very persuasive individual. We should be aware that we are without doubt competing with all those jurisdictions. Pennsylvania is ready to compete. Pennsylvania has an opportunity fund, a job-creating tax credit. These neighbouring jurisdictions are competing aggressively for jobs. If you talk to the auto sector you will find that one of the reasons we have a strong, growing auto sector in Ontario is because successive Ontario governments have worked cooperatively with them to get them to locate and expand their plants here; not throwing money away, but government programs designed to ensure that our Ontario industry was able to compete with other jurisdictions and where we invested money wisely. You can bet that our neighbouring jurisdictions are going to compete very aggressively for jobs in Ontario, and the government is putting, I say, at risk much of our future economic wellbeing by blindly saying, "We're going to cut this off."

I've now seen enough examples of mismanagement by this government that I think it's fair to raise a real flag. If I were in the back bench of this government I would be saying: "Look, wait a minute. These are Republican governments — Pennsylvania is Republican, Michigan is Republican — that offer good investment programs to get business to expand or locate in their jurisdictions."

My first concern with Bill 70 is that in the film area we are tinkering with one of the real success stories in Ontario, the film industry. We're cutting by a third; we've cut it by a third of its previous level, and that's a risk. I say to the government that if we find two and three years down the road that this industry has dried up, and believe me, it's an extremely competitive one, you'll be responsible.

I comment in the same section on the cooperative education program. Probably all of us in the House are enthusiastic about cooperative education; there's no question of that. All of us have seen in varying degrees the success of the co-op program. The University of Waterloo has probably been a leader in North America in the program.

I'm not sure this program is well designed or well thought out. It was perhaps slapped into the budget at the last minute because the government realized it had virtually nothing to say about youth and youth employment. The problem with this program is that by the government's own admission it plans for about 15,000 cooperative students to participate in the plan. There are right now 20,000 young people participating in the co-op plan. My feeling is that we will see, by and large, no increase in the number of cooperative students and we will find that 15,000 of the current placements will take advantage of the tax credit program. There is nothing in the way this program is designed to substantially increase the numbers. It essentially runs the risk of providing a \$1,000 tax credit for people who already have the

program. There's nothing in this program that ensures that we will see incremental cooperative placements.

A \$15-million subsidy to those who are already in the program is a reward for those who have participated, but in terms of young people looking for cooperative placements, it's not in this program. By the way, because the member who introduced the bill talked about employment and the need for jobs, I say to all of us that if we think the employment problem in Ontario is being solved and we simply say, "We need to think no more about it; it's going to solve itself," we are wrong. We have a job crisis. We have a structural number of unemployed in Ontario and we have a serious, long-term problem, and I know the government of the day will say, because it's in their interests: "Don't worry about it. It's all going to go away. We're going to solve it." But it won't and it isn't.

August was a good job creation month. I accept that. I said that publicly. But it does not begin to solve the significant structural problem. I'll just go over it, because I can guarantee that a year from now we will be having a major debate around jobs in Ontario. In the 1960s the unemployment rate in Ontario was 3.5%, in the 1970s it was 5.5%, in the 1980s it was 7.5% and in the 1990s — these are the government's own numbers — it's going to be 9%. The government itself says that in 1999 — actually in 1998, because that's as far as you go — there will be 16,000 more people out of work in Ontario than there were in 1995. That's straight out of the budget. Those aren't opposition figures; those are figures you published in the budget.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): What's Paul Martin saying?

Mr Phillips: Mr Guzzo is barking over there, "What's this, what's that?" You came here; you decided to run for the Ontario Legislature. Get over here and do some work, Mr Guzzo. If you want to bark at the federal government, go on and bark at them, but why don't you run federally? We are elected here to deal with Ontario problems and that's why I'm here. Perhaps you could devote a little bit of your time and attention to that rather than barking at the federal government.

I say to you that your own budget says, Mr Guzzo, more people out of work in 1998. What do you say about that? Do you say that's acceptable? Do you like that? Do you find that's good enough?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order. I would ask that you refrain from making comments directly to the speaker. I would ask the speaker to direct his comments through the Chair, if you would.

Mr Phillips: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Do you find it acceptable that one of your members finds it acceptable that in 1998 there will be 16,000 more people out of work in Ontario than in 1995? I don't, and I would say to all of us that if we simply say, "The problem is going to go away," we are making a huge mistake. We have a structural problem that I went over. Every decade unemployment rates have gone up. It used to be 3.5% in the 1960s, 5.5% in the 1970s, 7.5%, and now the government is predicting 9% unemployment. I add, you will see all the major economists of the bank saying that yes, the unemployment rate among our young people is reported somewhere around 15% but the real unemployment

rate — this is not me speaking; this is Warren Jestin, the chief economist at the Bank of Nova Scotia — among young people is closer to 30%. The reason I raise that is because in this document this was one of the big programs for young people — cooperative education. It is a program that will reward businesses with \$1,000 a year, but the government itself says 15,000 of these will be placed. There are 20,000 people in co-op right now. My fear is that we will see no more young people in cooperative education but will simply see \$15 million used to support 15,000 young people already in the co-op program.

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I wanted to go over those numbers because there can be a tendency to think that our unemployment problem is simply going to go away, and it won't. The sooner we as a Legislature turn our attention to looking at some creative solutions for this, the better.

I also wanted to talk a little about another aspect of the bill — the amendment to the Employer Health Tax Act. I did find this mildly curious, because the very first thing this bill does is to increase taxes on business. That's the very first thing this bill does. It eliminates the one-year tax holiday on increases in payroll. In other words, the previous government, the NDP government, introduced a proposal that if you hired someone you did not pay the payroll tax, the employer health tax, on their first year of employment. That was a program that was widely applauded. It was one that encouraged businesses — not in a huge way, but it encouraged businesses — to hire people, and it was a program that the government of the day felt would provide about a \$295-million benefit to small business; \$295 million was the benefit to business of this tax holiday.

Now, the very first thing this bill does is increase taxes on business by \$295 million. It seems odd that the first thing this bill does is to increase taxes by \$295 million. It's the most direct tax on new hires. That's the first thing it does. I thought the government would fully introduce the elimination of the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll, because you'll remember, Mr Speaker — I know you have your non-partisan hat on right now — when you were running in the campaign with your partisan hat on this was the document. You promised that you would eliminate the payroll tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll. As a matter of fact, it was going to be instant — get rid of the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll. But I was very surprised when the budget came out that the government had decided that it was going to do it a little differently. It wasn't going to do it immediately. It was going to do 50% of it in 1997 and then the next 25% in 1998 and the final 25% in 1999.

The reason I go through all this is that the government that got elected on the basis of cutting taxes for business is increasing taxes for business. You're going to find in 1997 that you have increased taxes on business, because you've completely cut out the holiday for new hires — and that's a \$295-million increase in taxes — and you have provided a partial offset on the elimination of the employer health tax on the first \$200,000 of payroll.

When you go back to your chamber of commerce, you are going to have to answer the question: "Wait a minute,

I thought you people were going to cut taxes on business and I see you've actually increased the tax on business." I found that somewhat inconsistent.

Another part of the bill I want to comment on: The labour-sponsored venture capital corporations have proven to be a useful tool and have provided a pool of capital for small business. However, the tax credits have been seen to be large. The federal government has reduced its tax credit and the provincial government is providing a corresponding decrease in the tax credits. That's probably a reasonable idea.

The changes that are being made in the Financial Administration Act: It is interesting to me to look at some of the fairly broad powers we're now giving to the minister. For example, "Where the provincial minister suspects that a taxpayer has left or is about to leave Ontario or Canada, the provincial minister may...by notice served personally or by registered letter..." etc. It does give some very broad, sweeping powers to a minister. It will be interesting over time to monitor the powers that are being given to the minister under this act.

The major part of this bill that I think the public should be focused on is, first, that the government recognizes that it sounds good out there to say, "We are going to cut support for business." The fact is that because the film industry is a classic case of a large, growing industry where we are competitive within at least North America, where we have been able to attract a huge industry here and a lot of talent, the government finally recognizes, "Maybe some of these supports for our growing industries are not such a bad idea after all." That's a tough thing for you to admit, and I think the way you're doing it actually puts at risk our film industry. You are cutting the support from roughly \$15 million previously to \$5 million. I will just say that if in the end we find we lose a huge industry because of that, the government will have made a very bad investment.

But the bigger point is that we are putting at risk some of our future industries by cutting some of the legitimate supports for our business community. I was in a major industry in Scarborough the other day, a plant that manufactures packaging. It has grown dramatically over the last few years, if I remember the numbers properly, from 100 employees to 400 employees; 80% or 85% of their shipments go outside of Ontario. They are now doing business not just in the US but in the Pacific Rim. They have a program there of training that is allowing them to become truly competitive globally, and for a modest amount of money by the federal government and the provincial government and obviously the company chipping in. That is one of the cornerstones. The organization is Shorewood Packaging, a really fine operation.

But the government has said, "We're going to cut our support for those programs." We are putting it at risk, because this plant competes with all sorts of other plants around North America from the same company. It competes for business. They've got several plants. One of the reasons it's been successful is because it has a very well-trained, qualified workforce, but this blind commitment to cut regardless of the consequences is putting at risk that very program.

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I think that in a year or a year and a half from now we are going to find some of our neighbouring communities, our neighbouring provinces and states doing a much better job of attracting and building industry than we are, because we have chosen to ignore some of the opportunity for some sensible investments.

It was an eye-opener for me to listen to the Governor of Pennsylvania. I thought he might very well say, "We certainly don't provide any government support," but they do for training, they do for a job creation tax credit, and these are things I'm afraid may encourage businesses to either locate there or expand there and not come to Ontario.

I'm very concerned about the cooperative education tax credit because I don't see anything in here that will encourage additional placements. I'm afraid that as the program is structured, it essentially will provide a tax benefit for those who perhaps have already been offering programs, but I see little that's designed to get lots of new co-op students in placement.

As I said earlier, I am interested to see in explanatory note (a) to part I, the very first thing, "to terminate the one-year tax holiday on increases in payroll effective at the end of 1996." What that means is that the one-year holiday from paying the employer health tax when you hire someone is gone. The government will save \$295 million. They will take taxes by that amount and they will offset it only partially with the rest of the employer health tax proposals.

All of this is being driven by a fiscal plan that I think is wrong. People say, "What should they do?" The deficit is a problem and it must be solved, but if it is such a problem, the people of Ontario have a legitimate right to say, "How can we at the same time afford a huge tax cut?" a tax cut where the more you make, the bigger the tax cut.

As I travel across Ontario, people are beginning, as I said earlier, to find that their hospitals are closing, that the seniors are now paying substantial user fees on drugs, that without exception classrooms are larger in September 1996 than they were in September 1995. Why is all this happening? It is because the government has to find \$5 billion to fund the tax cut.

Yes, people say, "I kind of like a tax cut," but what's the cost of it? The cost is that every penny of that tax is borrowed money. If you look at the budget, as I know you have, Mr Speaker, the budget shows that over the next four years in Ontario the debt will go up by \$22 billion; \$22 billion in the next four years is the increase in the debt. What it means is every penny of that tax cut is borrowed money. By the way, the interest just on that increased debt over the next four years is \$5 billion.

I raise that because this is a tax bill that is part of the government's fiscal plan.

The other thing I'd like to emphasize and then close on is the issue of employment, because in my opinion it is a problem that is not going away. We will get some temporary blips up, but we have a significant long-term structural problem that even the government acknowledges. In 1998 we will have 517,000 people out of work in Ontario and in 1995 we had 501,000 out of work in

Ontario. The unemployment rate will continue to be at 9% and we will have continued that very tragic trend of each decade the Ontario unemployment rate rising higher.

What we've got here are several modest proposals in this tax bill, two or three of which we have significant concerns about. The film tax credit, we are concerned that it is replacing a proven program and putting at risk an industry that has been a proven job creator in the province.

We are missing an opportunity with the cooperative education program to find ways that we can get substantial numbers of new young people on the program.

If I were in the government I would be asking the question of the government, why is it that we're taking the tax up on business in 1997 when we said we would be taking the tax down on business? Why is that?

So I would conclude by once again saying that we have major reservations about the government's fiscal plan. We think it's a mistake. This particular bill provides little in the way of hope and optimism for the people of Ontario who are really worried about jobs and job opportunities, particularly for young people.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the budget bill. It's the first time in my newly assigned role. The party has decreed that I shall be finance critic, so I did listen intently to someone who over the years has achieved credibility and the admiration and respect from all sides of the House, so little wonder, at the offset, that I share in his sentiment and I too question the substance, the results of what is being presented to us, which is the third reading of Bill 70, An Act to provide Co-operative Education and Film Industry Tax Credits, to create Economic Growth, to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget and to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister of Finance. So it's one hand that gives to people who make films, to the film industry. The same hand gives an incentive to people to create jobs, cooperative education.

The fact is that during the last campaign, those 40, 41 days immediately preceding June 8, 1995, when 130 members of the government, with a great deal of zeal, were going door to door and peddling the manifesto, the document referred to as the Common Sense Revolution — I have with me a copy and it's the seventh printing, over two million copies distributed. On page 13 of this manifesto, this political Koran, this political bible of the government, it says, "Cut Government Grants and Subsidies. We" — meaning the Conservatives — "will cut business subsidies and reduce government grants for total savings of \$200 million."

We're not talking about a grant — they're right — because with the help of the electorate when we changed the government, Dr Grant passed away; Dr Grant died. Dr Loan had his licence revoked. So now we have a substitute. You don't get a grant, you don't get a loan, but you get a tax break. You're not fooling anyone here; the bottom line is the same. This, from a government that tells us that it will cut government grants and subsidies. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. It never stops to amaze one.

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When you read the Common Sense Revolution, you shouldn't be shocked, appalled or surprised that the printed word 15 months after the election was held is somewhat different than the reality of the day. Share with me page 18 of the same document, "A Balanced Budget Plan," and I quote the Common Sense Revolution, "This plan will balance the Ontario budget within our first mandate," within five years. Keep in mind they were elected in 1995, on June 8. In the last budget, the Minister of Finance adds another year as a matter of convenience. In other words, he's saying to the people of Ontario: "I can't balance the books. What I've said in the Common Sense Revolution, well, you give me one more year."

Generally, they would like us to believe that if you're a Conservative you can manage because you understand how business works, that you know of intrinsic value, that you go to bed at night and you have The Warren Buffett Way, that those people know all the jargon. But they don't. This is a government that does not have a plan of attack past two years, by their own admission. This is a government that will have the province of Ontario in the poorhouse in a very short time if we don't collectively beyond the capacity of political parties, if Ontarians don't force them to put the brakes on.

This is Ontario's projected debt — the big provincial credit card; charge it — \$102 billion; by fiscal year 2000-01, and that's treasury's figure, not mine, they're the one saying this, \$117.5 billion. Spend, spend and spend again, which contradicts the Common Sense Revolution, which is pretty bad business.

The parliamentary assistant, the most distinguished member for St Patrick-St Andrew, tells us about venture capital. Madam, would you invest your hard-earned money in some of those venture capital? Would you have your seatmate, the member for Lambton, M. Beaubien — would you counsel? Is there enough time for due diligence when you say that you can contribute until the end of the RRSP season, which my notes indicate ends in February of each year? Where's the consistency when you must be fully invested by the end of the calendar year, which is by December 31?

You will recall perhaps vividly a federal scheme that provided an incentive seldom achieved before, that of flow-through shares. Flow-through shares were to permit the mining industry to find mines and of course put them into production. The reason why flow-through shares were very popular was because of the tax incentive. The feds are tightening up. The province has indicated that it will follow suit. This isn't General Motors, this isn't the cash flow, this isn't your ability to have capital allocation, this is not positive intrinsic value; this is very market-driven.

You will pay for the promotion. You'll have to go and knock on promoters and brokers and the law. They won't come knocking on your door. You will pay the premium dollar because you're floating venture capital. You'll go the route of the junk bonds — the title says it all — unless you can provide good incentives, because you don't have time for due diligence. You have little cash flow, if any. The track record is almost non-existent. You

need not factor in those fundamentals. So you balance it by incentives. As those incentives are being removed, you will have fewer people come to the marketplace to play. It's a feeble attempt to create jobs.

These people are on the hook. No rhyme or reason, no database, 725,000 jobs. What is your rationale? They could have said 800,000 or 400,000. Now, by all accounts, we know that the creation of 725,000 jobs will be one of their Achilles heels, the glass jaw in their economic argument. It's not going to happen. But we shouldn't be too harsh, we shouldn't point fingers at the government, because why should government take credit when you have a recovery? For to do so would entail, consistency would demand, that you also take the blame, take the hit when you have a correction or when you have a recession. You wouldn't wish to do that, but suffice it that 725,000 jobs has no chance of being achieved within your term of office — a contradiction to your Common Sense Revolution.

Add to it the convenience of adding a year to balance the books, which you're not about to do. You won't balance the books. By the end of the term, the minimum debt will, all Ontarians, total \$117.5 billion, spread all over the globe. There was a time when one talked about borrowing in the future, where Ontarians were more than able to shoulder the debt. They would buy those debentures. They would buy those obligations, those bonds. No longer.

The 1995-96 financing program, from the United States, 27.6%. Can't borrow at home, we have to see our neighbours to the south to give us a hand, "Will you please?" and you pay a premium. You're also vulnerable to the fluctuation in currency. Then you go to the Eurobonds, you go and tap the European market, 5.7%; private placement — "Harry, help me" — 9.7%; Japanese retail, 10.6%. I wonder how many times a day should we spend because, if we're interested, by the time we go to bed those markets have opened. I mean, you need some sleep, putting in long hours as an MPP. But it never ends. So tomorrow morning in my new capacity I'll have to open the television and say, preferably on my knees, praying that the Nikkei market, the Hong Kong market and then the London market will have opened — amen — and on and on, because we are vulnerable. We no longer can suffice our debt. We need more credit cards.

1650

This is a government that will do better? Do you really believe this? This is what some of the critics are saying — not New Democrats, no, no, no. Those women, those men working very hard for a living don't tread the same circles as the Fraser Institute. The Fraser Institute was not behind the October 17 revolution, not at all. This is what they say: "Survey Finds Pessimism Over Deficit: Ontario Unlikely to Reach Target by 2000." Seventy-two percent of the fund managers, the financiers, are saying, almost three quarters of them, "You're not going to do it."

The government of Ontario has promised to balance its budget by the year 1999-2000. Oh, its actual target is 2000-2001. I see. His Progressive Conservative Party — they're talking about yourself, about you — had promised

during the 1995 election campaign to wipe out the deficit by 1999-2000. But in his economic statement 10 months ago, Mr Eves extended the target date by one year. I guess he's not going to make it. I wouldn't put my money. He's managing my tax dollars. That scares me a little bit. This government has acquiesced, says that upon leaving office — it's not too soon — it will leave with it a debt of nearly \$120 billion. That's the minimum. It cannot balance the books.

Where does the government take its money? Personal income tax: \$15.4 billion. The total revenue is \$47 billion; \$15 billion comes from the personal income tax. Retail sales tax: \$9 billion. But what this government is saying — it's very simple; we'll do it together. Fifteen billion dollars is what they take from the PIT, the provincial income tax, but they're going to cut that by 30%. So it's \$5 billion approximately, grosso modo, a year. It has a deficit of \$8 billion. So it goes up to \$13 billion — eight plus five, no problem. We have a Treasurer who understands these things. A psychotic is someone who assumes that two and two make five. But the Treasurer knows that two and two make four. But he's a neurotic; he doesn't like it at all, because now he has to add another \$5 billion. So that's \$13 billion. They've already cut \$8 billion. That's what they claim. They won't say "\$8 billion." They're lucky if they get \$6 billion. But assuming that they would be fortunate, that they would be right in this instance and they could generate in savings \$8 billion, experts are saying you'll have to find another \$2 billion.

My question is this: Where else are you going to cut? This will impact your revenue, of course. Are you going to ask teachers to take on more students so there will end up 45 or 50 to a classroom? You've said you wouldn't impact on the classroom. Nobody believes you. People are getting your kind of payola, gratuity. It's the pink slip out the door. More students coming in — look at the demographics — and fewer teachers, so larger classrooms, of course.

Hospitals are being closed. The government says, "We're not going to cut health care." You're cutting two out of three hospitals in Sudbury. Thunder Bay, the announcement will be made tomorrow: care workers, providers, people who do it full-time for a wage, are being reduced by the thousands, and more and more people need the service. So that's the rationale — fear, anxiety. When we're talking about health, it leads to fear. There's where the money is. You're spending \$18 billion; \$14 billion on education. So if you want to enact savings and you're caught, no escape: You have to go right to the heart of those ministries. This will spell the downfall of the government, health more so than education. You scare people. "We're all on a waiting list." "My children were born here." "You're shutting the hospital." "My husband passed away here." "There is a tradition." "My aunt is in the corridor because she can't get into the ward." And on and on. Those people will attack the sacred trust in our society, that of our cherished health care system, and they will be found fighting on so many fronts because they're taking \$5 billion and giving it — they call it a tax break. They say, "You'll have a few dollars more in your pocket," and yet they turn around and cut transfer

payments to municipalities, so your municipal taxes are going to go up. They have the power to levy.

When the sons and daughters take part in recreational activities, they're going to pay more. When they go to post-secondary school and enter university, they're going to pay more. So levy and taxes, there'll be more money coming out of their pockets.

They'll say to the township of Manitouwadge: "You're a small village, a small community. You now enjoy the protection and the service of the Ontario Provincial Police. Now you're going to pay." So you'll have \$200 to \$400 more. No wonder people can't sleep at night because they're anxious. They don't know, but they know that it does not add up. They want to believe we have a government that will do what it said. I'm afraid of people who don't change their minds to suit some circumstances.

While the population appreciates a political entity, a government, a regime, that delivers or comes close, the same people will not appreciate extreme zeal to the detriment of their welfare. It will be more difficult in the second year, because it's coming home now, the sort of black magic of compounding transfers to municipalities, schools, hospitals. All the subject matters, our daily lives, are being impacted because of the commitment they made to give more money to Conrad Black, God bless him, to Frank Stronach — him too — and the people who need it the least, to the detriment of the middle class, which pays for all this and now sees itself under a state of siege. The numbers are getting smaller. The winner-take-all group and friends of friends are allowed to leave the field behind.

1700

We have a great deal of difficulty. This government has had no program the past two years. It governs by the seat of its pants. They are putting the province further and further in the hole — \$117 billion at the end of their term, which will not come soon enough.

Vous m'avez donné l'opportunité ; je vous en remercie aussi. Vous savez, c'est la première fois que j'ai l'opportunité de m'adresser en tant que critique des finances pour le Nouveau Parti démocratique.

Vous savez que quelqu'un pourrait continuer ad vitam aeternam, tard dans la soirée, tôt dans la nuit. J'ai choisi en ce moment d'émettre quelques mises en garde, de dire au gouvernement, «Monsieur le Gouvernement, attention. Arrêtez de faire mal aux gens, aux esseulés, aux pauvres, aux moins bien nantis, à ceux qui en ont moins, aux vulnérables, aux vieillards, aux enfants, qu'il faut gouverner à coup de dimension humaine. N'oubliez pas Ontario, les Ontariens qui continuent à oeuvrer pour le bénéfice de la province entière.» Ce sont ces gens que le gouvernement a choisi de cibler, autant à l'échelle de la santé qu'à l'échelle de l'éducation. On est allé chercher les deniers publics à travers les programmes sociaux.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Questions and comments?

Mr Bisson: I just want to take this opportunity to comment on our finance critic's comments today on the budget. The point he makes is a good one, the question about who benefits in the equation of this government and who does not benefit according to what this government is doing. If you take a look at the various initiatives

this government has gone forward with, by and large, without trying to be too partisan, they're fairly pro-business, fairly pro-big-business. Those people who find themselves on the other side of that equation find themselves on the losing side.

As we go through the debates of this House and look at this legislation which the government brings forward and various pieces of legislation here on in, I think we will recognize that is a recurring theme through all of this. This government has clearly chosen sides. The government has said the be-all and end-all of everything that happens in the Legislature of Ontario should be based on what is good for the corporate citizens of this province and not necessarily what's good for the people.

I would just remind the government members through this debate that government is not about serving the interests of one's only masters, the corporate citizens. Yes, they have rights, and yes, they have the right to be able to make a profit in this great province, and yes, they have a say in what happens in policy, but not at the expense of other people in our economy, not at the expense of the hardworking men and women of this province who work hard every day, who try to make an honest day's living, who look at what this government is doing and, in the end, who wonder where they figure in it.

The government member said, "We're sitting at 48% or 52% in the polls." Listen, I was a member of a government that after a year was at over 60% in the polls. We shouldn't sit back and look at polls and say, "I should feel real comfortable about that," because I can tell you, there is a groundswell of feeling out there, not only in northern Ontario but other parts of this province, where people who may even be supporters of this Conservative government truly are concerned about some of the directions this government is taking and are wondering where they will fit in all of this at the end. They hope that in the end it will benefit them, but in the long run I think not. This government should get back to the agenda it was elected to do, and that is government for the people.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions or comments? Mr Pouliot, you have two minutes to wind up.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: All right, further debate.

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the Honourable Marilyn Mushinski, it is my privilege to stand in the House today and speak on the economic and cultural benefits the Ontario film and television tax credit will bring to our province.

Over a year ago, like many Ontarians, I went to the Toronto International Film Festival to experience the finest films from around the world. I went for the first time as parliamentary assistant, and as I made the rounds I gained a new appreciation for the excellence and vitality of our own homegrown film and television industry.

Talking with producers, actors and other industry representatives, I also learned something of the challenges of production, the high risks involved, the difficulty in establishing and securing stable financing, the intense competition from other provinces and countries. It is no longer a case of your simply —

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Taking some time to review the standing orders earlier today in preparation for another job I was looking for —

Interjection: Could you describe that? A job description, please?

The Acting Speaker: Please continue with your point of order.

Mr Stockwell: I'm doing my best. I've been so rudely interrupted by my own caucus.

It says in standing order 86(a), "Every estate bill or part of a bill that contains an estate bill provision stands referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills after first reading." I think we should be cognizant of that.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for your point of order. It is not a point of order, nothing to do with this debate whatsoever, but thank you for raising it. The member can continue.

Mr Clement: I would like to thank the honourable member for Etobicoke West for his very timely and cogent point of order on that.

The point I was trying to make was that not only are we competing with what would be considered the centres of film in North America, such as Los Angeles and New York, but we're also competing with places like Vancouver, British Columbia, where in fact they share the same time zone as Los Angeles. They have a diversity of not only climate but also topography, with mountains and oceans as well as an urban landscape. So we are competing with our brethren in other provinces as well.

Here is an industry that has the potential to prosper and grow within the new Ontario. It is an entrepreneurial industry, an innovative industry, and it's cutting edge. It's internationally recognized for its high professional standards and it wasn't looking for government handouts. No, it was looking for incentives to encourage private sector financing.

I resolved that I would do my part to help to promote the creation of the fiscal environment and I'm pleased to support this bill because it not only does that; it rewards success, it rewards the companies that will add the jobs that will pay the taxes, that will hire the high-end people who will do the jobs in Ontario. That is why I support this bill at this time.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments? Further debate?

Mr Bradley: I'd like the opportunity to discuss some aspects of this bill on third reading and matters that are related to the bill. First of all, as I mentioned in a short intervention previously, we're in a circumstance where we have an extremely successful film industry, and I want to give credit to the people who've been involved in it in Ontario over the years. But one of the reasons it's been able to be successful is because of the generous support which has been forthcoming from government.

1710

I heard somebody say earlier today that Premier Harris in one incarnation or another had referred to these people as welfare recipients or something to that effect. I hope that wasn't the case — I heard another speaker talk about that — because this is a good investment. This government would have among its members many who would

consider themselves to be good investors and this indeed is a good opportunity for the government to invest and to improve upon the tax credit. I understand the tax credit circumstance is not enhanced by this bill. It may be a bit more detrimental as a result of this bill. Again, a good program, in my view, appropriately used.

The reason we're seeing some of this activity is because the government is trying to find any way it can to either save money or generate new funds as a result of the tax cut. That is the cut that was announced, which is 30%, the most generous portion going to the richest people in our society, and as a result the government is making far deeper cuts than I think anybody had anticipated to try to meet its deficit targets.

We're pleased that the economy in Canada and in the United States has combined to ensure that we have somewhere close to our deficit target met this year. Those of us in the opposition you may think hope that this is not the case. In fact, we hope it is. We hope we exceed some of those expectations which have been expressed because it's good for the people of the province as a whole.

I saw another matter that I raised in the House today that is a direct result, as I see some of this legislation, of the tax cut, and that is the government moving in a massive way to put video lottery terminals, or as I would call them, electronic slot machines, in every bar and restaurant in Ontario. Some of the old Conservatives from years gone by, if they are deceased, would be rolling over in their graves, and if they're still alive, would be expressing great concerns about this major departure in policy for a Progressive Conservative government, and I think with a good deal of justification.

I suspect, however, that the government didn't want to do this, but found out when it did its calculations that the lost revenue from the tax cut was so great that the government was going to have to embark upon yet another gambling venture, this being video lottery terminals, the most insidious, the most alluring, the most seductive form of gambling we have, and it'll prey upon the most vulnerable in our society, the most desperate, those who don't have the in with others to get the better jobs or may not have had the opportunity to gain the education and training that more privileged people in our society have. They often will be the people playing the video lottery terminals, as well as those who are addicted to gambling.

We have a circumstance in all of our communities — I can see in this bill that they're trying to trim again — where there's a threat of hospitals being closed. Certainly we in the Niagara region, and I can speak for the provincial constituency of St Catharines and the city of St Catharines, are trembling at the thought that the Shaver Hospital, the general hospital or the Hotel Dieu Hospital could be closed.

I'm sure the member for Niagara South is worried about the Fort Erie and Port Colborne hospitals which have provided good service to the citizens of that area over the years, that someone may be swinging an axe at one of those. The member for St Catharines-Brock and Niagara-on-the-Lake will be worried, and the member for Lincoln if the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital — all of

these are under the potential axe of the provincial government, and the reason they're under the axe is because this government is bound and determined it must proceed with its 30% tax cut which is going to cost it so much in revenue that it's going to have to find that revenue in the form of cuts; in other words, to balance that budget or to come closer to balancing the budget.

That's most unfortunate because many people have contributed so much over the years to the hospitals in their community through donations of funds or donations of time, effort and energy and they will feel betrayed, as I know the people of Thunder Bay and the people of Sudbury have felt betrayed, and the people of Warton at the thought and the people now of Kitchener at the thought of various hospitals being closed.

In education, despite the assurances from the Premier, from the Minister of Education and from Conservative candidates across the province that the classroom would not be affected, the classroom is in fact being affected. We have more students in the classroom now. We have fewer services being available to students who require special services from the board of education. They are students often who were institutionalized previously or at least kept home and not allowed into the so-called normal classroom stream.

These students have been encouraged now to be part of that mainstream and that is in so many cases a very positive aspect of our society, but those services are being removed and as a result it causes increased tension and difficulty within the classroom as the needs of that individual child must be met as well as the needs of many others in the classroom.

As teachers are being fired across the province, I heard some say, "Well, you know, we thought" — I was talking to a teacher at a baseball game in St Catharines who said, "You know, I voted for Mike Harris because I was in favour of cuts," and I said: "Well, you got cuts. There's not much I can do about that." He did cut, but this person didn't know that he was going to be cut. But you see, when you start cutting administration, you bump down the line and those who were the consultants that people railed on against for years are back in the classroom. So who got bumped? The other people got bumped. Who ultimately suffers from this? The students in the classrooms of our province. We're seeing this happening in place after place.

My good friend, Roger Ellen, who was I think the campaign manager for the member for Lincoln, must be recoiling at some of the cuts and some of the moves being undertaken by the Minister of Education as they affect the classroom because I always admired him and his commitment — that is, Mr Ellen's commitment — to education in our province.

We have sports organizations. The Ministry of Culture is involved in this bill. I have raised in this House the issue of sports organizations and how they have been tarnished by some of the comments by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. He referred to them as welfare cases that had to be taken off the dole. Of course, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who knows sports, who has been involved in sports, had some interesting quotes about that,

saying that the minister was simply there to preside over the destruction of these organizations or the disassembling of them, and he had less complimentary remarks to make about the parliamentary assistant.

But again, we're seeing these cuts. Why are we seeing them? Because this government's worshipping at the idol of a tax cut. It's very popular. I know when you ask anybody, would you like a tax cut, they say yes. If you say would you like your sports organizations to be disassembled, would you like your hospitals to close, would you like more students in the classroom, they say none to any of those.

In this specific bill, I must say, I'm glad that the government is retaining at least part of its support for the film industry. The reason I say that is the more the film industry is successful, the more taxes they're going to pay, the more economic activity they're going to generate. The government wins, the people of this province win, the industry wins, our people in the cultural community are enhanced in their reputations, and I'm extremely pleased about that.

But I know the sports organizations are waiting in trepidation for the announcement on Friday, and I want to tell the members of this House that those volunteers who have worked so hard for our sports organizations which provide constructive, positive, healthy activities for young people and those not so young in our province are deserving of full credit and this will represent a slap in the face to their volunteer efforts over the years, because they recognize the need for the sports organizations to coordinate at the provincial level, to assist at the provincial level. Yes, there are some positions which are paid positions, but they are necessary and they are helpful to the sporting community.

I look at local offices being closed. Members in the House here will have now the drivers' testing offices being closed in their areas, in Welland and in other parts of the Niagara Peninsula. People who are going to take the driver's test will have to come into St Catharines, unfamiliar territory, particularly for senior citizens and others who might be a bit nervous about this particular aspect of their lives.

I note that nothing in this bill seems to do very much for the people who are losing their jobs at various industries in St Catharines — the people at Mott's, that is, Cadbury Schweppes in St Catharines. That place is closing down even though they got a letter from the company saying they were doing a great job after the announcement was made that they were closing down. Those people are concerned. Where are they going to get jobs? I hope the Minister of Agriculture and others are able to assist in getting some kind of cooperative company back on its feet to service the growers in our area and to provide those needed jobs for the people who have lost their jobs, or are about to, at Cadbury Schweppes, just as many at General Motors have lost their jobs as a result of the closing of the foundry and other engine line portions of the operation.

1720

If you ask anybody who hasn't been to St Catharines for 10 years and who used to live there, "How many people do you think work at General Motors?" they'd

probably say 8,000 or 9,000 people. Well, I've got news for them: It's 5,300. And General Motors, if it has its way with this contract, will have it below 5,000 as a result of outsourcing. So I wonder what in legislation that we see coming before us is going to help those people. Or those at Phona Corp who lost their jobs; or a portion of Court Industries which moved to the United States; or Kelsey-Hayes, which was an important industry in the downtown portion of the city of St Catharines; or Foster Wheeler, major in the work that it's done for Ontario Hydro and others over the years.

All of these people who are losing their jobs are looking for something in the legislation that will help them, and the incentive in terms of support for people who are going to hire new people, that kind of incentive, is a good thing. It gives people some experience and it allows the company to have some people in its employ that it might not otherwise have.

All of us have received as well calls about the family support situation. As the province abruptly changes from regional offices to one central office, we have many unfortunate people who have been unable to get their funds through this office. You may think this is only women who are registering complaints, who are saying, "I cannot get my support payments," but in many of these cases the men and the women, the former spouses, are combining to say that the operation is so haphazard that they have been unable to transfer the funds from one person to another through the family support office. We have both the men and the women, both spouses, who are calling the office to discuss this matter.

My colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt talked about a number of items of great interest to those of us on the opposition side, but I wanted to share some of the time with others. The leader of the Liberal Party, Lyn McLeod from Fort William, has a particular interest in this bill, particularly the portion which deals with the film industry, because she has been so supportive over the years and has seen the benefits of this film industry. It's one of the real successes. Ask people in the States. They know. If you go to people in the United States, they are frankly complaining that so much business is coming to Canada, that our people have been so successful.

Why has that been? Because David Peterson had great faith in that industry, and the subsequent government of Bob Rae had interest in that industry as well. Now this government appears to be cutting back considerably on the kind of investment that would help us in Ontario generate economic activity, funds for government so it could meet the obligations it has, new job opportunities for Canadians and something of which we can be justifiably proud.

This legislation, while it's not among the most draconian that we see before us, it's not conceived with machiavellian minds on the other side — it has aspects that deserve support, but a number of aspects which are of great concern to those of us in the opposition. I hope the government will take that into account. It's third reading, so I don't expect the minister who is responsible or the government House leader to get up and announce that they're withdrawing the bill as a result of the arguments put forward by the opposition, but I hope they

will at least look to monitoring its effect and to modifying it in the next budget if indeed they see fit to do so.

I terminate my remarks with that and with the hope that the government will reconsider its policies, particularly that the people who are not in the cabinet will put pressure on those who are in the cabinet to make those kinds of changes. I know you must feel lonely and isolated from time to time. I've listened to many people. I've read accounts in the newspaper of how frustrating it is for some of the backbenchers who would like to be able to persuade the government to change its mind but are simply given the script to read. That must be galling to the intelligent and forthright and concerned individuals in the government caucus, who are forced, by virtue of the fact that they want to move up in the echelon of the Harris regime, from making their comments or are intimidated by the fact that perhaps the government will not allow its limited largess to be extended to any particular riding.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): David loved your speech.

Mr Bradley: The member for Burlington South I know is looking forward to this. He says he has been relegated a little bit outside of the main realm of the cabinet here, the main bloc. I just hope they don't close any of his hospitals in the Burlington South area.

Hon Mr Jackson: If you ever get sick we'll take good care of you.

Mr Bradley: I know that if I'm ever passing there on the way back to St Catharines, the Brant hospital, I will hope I get taken good care of and that it hasn't been closed.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Bisson: As always, I enjoy the comments from the member for St Catharines, who has been in this Legislature for a long enough period of time —

Mr Bradley: Too long.

Mr Bisson: I'm trying to be polite, Jim. I've heard him speak on a number of issues. On this one, I think he's right. It really does come down to the question of who benefits. The member for St Catharines was using as an example what happened in the family support program. The government, in its zeal to save dollars to be able to give a tax break to the most wealthy in this province, is scurrying around ministries trying to find savings in any way they can, without any real thought about what it means to the people it affects.

In the family support plan program, we have seen across the province of Ontario literally 10 and 20 and 30 people coming into our constituency offices by the week complaining that they're trying to pay support payments to their ex-wives and the money is not making it through the system. Why? It's because the government has fouled up the transition. They have said that they want to change the system of payment support from being one administered by government workers to a system administered by the private sector, probably through the banks in the end, and in that transition haven't given any thought about what happens to the people who get caught in the system.

I have had, at my constituency offices in Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Matheson, literally tens of people come in per week, which is a fairly significant number in

a constituency office on one issue. The issue is not always what the government purports it to be, about previous claims; it's the issue of what happens with claims where people are trying to pay support to their ex-wives but the money is not making it through the system.

I say to the government, again it's an example of who benefits from what you're doing. As a government it's incumbent upon you to govern on behalf of the people of the province, not just a few within the corporate sector. That's all it is going to achieve in the end: giving opportunity to the corporate sector to make more dollars, in this case off the FSP program, at the expense of the working men and women of this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions or comments? The member for St Catharines, you can sum up. No? Further debate.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): It is a privilege, as I always say, to stand in this House and represent my constituents and the people of Ontario in the important debate that happens here about issues that affect all of us and about which all of should have some tremendous concern, particularly when you put any particular piece of the agenda of this government into the context of the full agenda of the government, which everybody knows is very clearly to downsize government, diminish the impact of government on the everyday lives of people in this province so that, in their way of putting it, business can get on with the business of generating more wealth and making life better for all of us.

It's in the light of that that we look at this particular bill, which is presented as something that will be good for all the people of Ontario. We know, those of us who have taken the time to look at it in any detail, that in fact it is again a bill that's going to move more of the resources and the wealth of this province into the hands of those very few who already have more than enough to take care of their own needs and take away from those who have the least, and create an ever-burgeoning chasm between the rich and the poor in this province and in this country.

1730

I think we have to look at these bills in the context of what government is about or supposed to be about. It's my understanding that government is supposed to be about creating an environment in a jurisdiction — and in this instance we're talking about Ontario — that creates a level playing field for all who call themselves citizens of that particular jurisdiction, so that they can maximize the potential they have, to use the resource that they are. I don't think there's anybody in this place who will disagree that the greatest resource this province has, first and foremost, is its people.

A government, in my mind, is charged with the responsibility of making sure that all those people are able to participate to the fullest degree possible, using the skills they've either been born with or have developed through the education system or the other institutions we have available to us in this province to develop their talents in the best interests of themselves and their families, of the community in which they live and of the whole of the province of Ontario. If a government is not doing that, if what a government is in fact doing is

somehow taking away from that, I think we need to be pointing that out, particularly those of us in opposition in this place, who have been elected in a position of opposition to challenge the agenda of the day.

Certainly there are lots of indicators in this province today to say that things aren't going as the government projected they would, if given the opportunity to govern, in their Common Sense Revolution and in their financial and budget statements to date, and as those who voted for them expected they might go. More and more people are becoming concerned and alarmed. Indeed, certainly some of the folks I've talked to in Sault Ste Marie tell me they are quite disappointed in what they're seeing.

Mostly they're saying to me that they hope this government — because they know they're going to be government for another three or four years — is doing the right thing and that at the end of the day we will be all better. But the immediate result of the decisions being made are not saying that. People are being hurt, and hurt in ways that they will find very difficult to overcome some of the damage that is done, because life is short for all of us. That time in our life when we can participate fully in the affairs of state is even shorter, when you consider the time we get in versus the time we get out, when we retire and live in that state. So it's really important that whatever government is in place, whether it's here in Toronto at Queen's Park or in Ottawa, be working in the best interests of all the people of Canada and of Ontario.

Certainly that doesn't seem to be what is going on. I think we have to look at the indicators and be concerned about what those indicators are telling us. If you listen to the Premier, Mike Harris, in the statement he made in this House last week at the opening of this session, you'd be led to believe that everything is hunky-dory, that there are no problems, that life is unfolding as it should and that at the end of the day we will all be better. You have to consider for a minute who it is that Mr Harris is talking to and who it is he's taking advice from and that he's listening to.

He came back from a visit to Europe, and who was he associating with there? Is it the ordinary worker at a steel plant? Is it a mother who is working during the daytime at a job to give her money to pay the rent and then coming home at night and taking care of the family? Is it a teacher or a doctor or a nurse? Is that who he's talking to? No. He's talking to the movers and shakers on the global scene, the financiers, those people who manage economies from on high in New York and Tokyo and London. He's talking to those people, and they're giving him a view of the world that, in their opinion, is one that speaks of a certain trend, of the need for less government, of the need for a freer marketplace, for more ability of the private sector to come in and exploit the resources of a particular area, with no concern whatsoever for the impact of that on communities, on families and on ordinary citizens.

That should concern us, because those are the people that Mike Harris has most recently come back from talking to. They're the people who are telling him what is best for us in Ontario. The other people that he must be talking to are his friends and cronies that he meets on

the golf course, who are telling him that what he's doing is right on.

I remember one interview this past summer of a person on a golf course somewhere in southern Ontario, who said that he thought what Mike Harris and his government were doing was perfectly all right because it hadn't affected him personally yet. I think that's a telling statement. More and more people in this province are becoming affected directly now and are becoming concerned and beginning to realize that we have some difficulties.

If you look at the groups in this province who from time to time come out and make statements, give us statistics or give us a read on statistics, their particular take on a set of statistics, about whether we are doing well or are not doing well, they're all over the map. One day we get an economic think tank that comes out and tells us that everything is going just fantastic and that at the end of the day the economy will be better and there will be more jobs and all of us will be better off. Then the next day, we get another think tank or economic advisory committee, such as the Conference Board of Canada, coming out and telling us that we should be concerned, running up a red flag, that things aren't as good as we're made to believe and that we should be concerned and asking questions and that perhaps we should be doing something different.

That confuses people. That leaves people in a position of great worry, and when people are worried, I don't think they participate as fully as we would like them to in their workplaces and at home. That doesn't contribute to an overall healthy economy and society, so that's reason for concern.

Of course the governments of the day jump on the bandwagon of the organizations or boards or think tanks that come out and say good things and agree with them, because it's in their best interest. The federal government particularly these days is grabbing at any straw that speaks of good economic times, of jobs being created and the economy getting better, because they're not far from having to go before the people and present to them the record of their time in office so the people can pass judgement. Of course they're going to be jumping on all those statements or reports or studies that say things are going well or evolving as they should, and trying to diminish or downplay those different groups that say they're not. Certainly the folks across the floor from us here in this Legislature are wont to grab on to those particular announcements as well.

I use an example from yesterday's paper. In the last couple of days we were hearing different organizations and agencies saying to us that everything was fine, that we didn't have to worry, that jobs were being created. We had Statistics Canada come out and say that more jobs were created in the last month than there were the month before and that the ball was beginning to roll. Yet we have yesterday — I'm reading now from the Hamilton Spectator, because I was in Hamilton earlier today — a report in the Spectator. The headline says, "Canadian Economy on a Slide, Group Says," and guess what group this is? This is the Conference Board of Canada. The Conference Board of Canada says that

"Canada's relative pace among such countries as the United States, Germany, Japan and China has slipped over the past 10 years," and this was the president of the board, Jim Nininger, who said this.

I'd recommend a reading of this article to any of you in the House or any of you out there who have access to this. It probably went by CP out to various other newspapers. It's worth reading because it paints a very different picture than the picture the Premier painted in this House last week when he got up and gave that very glowing statement of how things are getting better. Well, we know, because we who have been elected to this place, who are not in government any more, probably have more time on our hands to sit down at home and talk to our constituents. We probably do. As government, we're very busy, we're very busy with the business of government; it meant that I spent more time in Toronto. But when you're not in government you spend more time in the coffee shops. What's the name of that coffee shop in Manitouwadge?

1740

Mr Pouliot: The Casa d'Or.

Mr Martin: The Casa d'Or, the Copper Cave Café. You talk to the people there and they tell you what's going on. They have contact with their neighbours and their friends and their family members, and they know if they're getting jobs or if they're not getting jobs. They know if the economy is going well. They know that if the boss comes in one day and he's feeling good and happy, things are probably working out well, the financial reports he read the night before, before he went to bed, were good news; they know if they were bad news. They sense that. They feel that.

If you're a good member, as some of the members here are, even some of the members across the way, you spend a lot of time, particularly if you're a backbencher, at home listening to your constituents. They're telling them the same story I'm hearing in my particular neck of the woods, that in the lives of their friends and neighbours, that in the lives of people they call family things aren't quite as rosy as the Premier would make out in his statement of last Tuesday. As a matter of fact, they're very concerned. Some of them have family heads who are no longer working. Their UI is running out, because the federal government has made that more difficult to access, and less generous, and they're looking at the possibility of having to go on to welfare. You know what happens in Ontario now if you get on to welfare: It's not long before you're on workfare and all that means in the life of a person who has worked very hard all their life, who's very proud to be a tradesperson of some sort, bringing money home, paying the rent, putting lots of food on the table so that at Christmastime there's turkey and there are gifts and all the rest of it. Now they're beginning to ask themselves if they're going to be able to do that any more because the circumstances in Ontario have changed.

Even though perhaps Statistics Canada is right when it says that the number of jobs being created is better than it was last month, I had a group in my office on Friday when I was at home, I say to the member for Lake Nipigon, and they were a group of custodians at a

number of schools in my city who said to me that no, the school board in Sault Ste Marie is not laying off a whole lot of custodians. What they're doing is cutting back on the number of hours they're able to work so that they have the same number of people working but they're working fewer hours. I'd suggest to you that this is an indication of what's happening in other jurisdictions.

Perhaps there were some more jobs created in July and August of this year, but I suggest to you that on closer scrutiny you'll find that those jobs were probably part-time and perhaps the same person was working at two or three of them to make the same amount of money they were making before working at one, and those part-time jobs did not have the same level of benefit attached to them. Who knows if they had a pension package? Who knows what kind of benefits, by way of health care or looking after your teeth or whatever, which so many of us take for granted these days because we have a good, secure job?

I say to the members across the way, your job is secure for now, but you may find yourself, in the not-too-distant future, back in a position where you are beginning to face some of the realities some of your constituents are facing out there, and it's not very pretty.

Mr Pouliot: If they don't chop their ridings first.

Mr Martin: That's right. They're going to chop the ridings up and some of them won't have a job for sure. Without even going to the hustings they won't have a job, and we know what all that means.

What are we looking at as indicators of whether the economy is good or bad? This piece of legislation we're looking at today is part of the budget package we were presented with last year. It's a tax bill, and we know where they're going with taxes: They're going to cut taxes and they're telling us that this is going to be good for all of us, that somehow they're going to be able to cut taxes, preserve the services we've all come to appreciate and enjoy and expect and that will support us in developing a good economy in this province, and balance the budget all at the same time. We know that's a conjurer's dream, and only a conjurer would even imagine taking such a challenge on and actually think he could pull it off. That's what we're presented with in Ontario today.

As I said, one has to ask oneself the question: What is government about? What is government supposed to be doing? What is the job of government? Particularly in difficult times when we're all facing some of the same challenges re the economy and our ability to pay the bills — the government's facing that, families are facing that, communities are facing that, we're all facing that — it seems to me it's the role of government to be there, to be involved, to be a partner, to be a facilitator of discussion and restructuring and reorganizing in a way that sees everybody win in the end.

We all agree there are some things that need to be done differently. We, as a government, were moving in that direction, but we weren't laying people off in the very unthoughtful and massive way that this government is, and doing it so that the rest of their plan can make some sense and fit in place and they can move ahead

with this tax cut that they're suggesting and that we'll be voting on very soon in this House.

The question is: What indicators are you going to look at? Who are you going to listen to? Are you going to listen to Mike Harris when he comes before the House and reads this very glowing and hopeful statement after coming from spending a week or so in France, I believe it was, with all the wheelers and dealers, the financiers of the world who are the engineers of the new global economy that we're getting ourselves into that's saying very clearly that government has to get out of the way, that government has to back off, that government has to be downsized, that government has no place any longer in the lives of people, that government should not be involved in the way that traditionally in this province and in this country government has become involved in being a major factor in the economy of this province? Who do you listen to? Do you listen to them or do you listen to the people of this province who are being hit every day directly by some of the decisions that are being made by this government?

In wrapping up, I think it's only appropriate that I should share with you just a few thoughts, just a couple of thoughts from some of my constituents who have written to me to tell me that Mike Harris should forget his tax break and stay the course that other governments have indicated they were going to do in preserving services and keeping in place all those institutions that we feel are so important to the economy of this province.

Just one letter. It says:

"Mike Harris, our country did not get like this overnight so you won't be able to fix it overnight. Quit making the people suffer. I know you're not suffering. These cuts don't affect you. You, Mike Harris, try to live on \$900 a month with three kids and see if you could do it. If there was a way to get you out of government I'd vote today to get you out, because I didn't vote you in and I don't agree with what you're doing, and what you're doing is hurting me big time."

Just one other letter in wrapping up, and it goes like this — I wish I had more time because I have another letter here that actually talks a bit about —

Mr Bisson: You're running out of time.

Mr Martin: Yes, I'm running out of time — the model that Mike Harris is following, which is the one that's happening in New Jersey, and we all know about that. It says here, "Not a day goes by but it seems that we are not able to hear from one source of the media or the other about the enormous discoveries of wealth from the natural resource sector of our nation."

This person goes on to say in this letter, "The wealth that is generated from that natural resource that we have in Ontario should be in ever more progressive ways used to help the people who live in those particular areas." It's signed by a Mr Gord Shaughnessy, who is very upset with the agenda of this government.

Anyway, I thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to listening to others talk on this subject.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I do appreciate my colleague from Sault Ste Marie, who had some important messages to bring on this matter from his

constituents, leaving me a few moments because I felt compelled to come into the House today to speak on one portion of this bill, and that's the replacement of the film investment program by this new tax credit program.

1750

I recognize, as my colleague the member for St Catharines has said, that this is now a done deal, that this bill is about to pass in the next 10 minutes, and I suppose I should be grateful that a tax credit program to support the film industry is better than having no program at all, but I can't miss this opportunity to state my continued dismay and my frustration that the Ontario film investment program is being abandoned and replaced with a tax credit program which will not, in my view, do nearly as much to stimulate the film and television industry in the province of Ontario.

I am absolutely amazed that this happened on the part of a government that seems to be concerned about revenue and seems to be concerned about business and industry, and obviously failed to do any kind of economic impact analysis when it decided to cut the Ontario film investment program. I suppose it probably fell victim along the way to the kind of blind cost cutting that goes on as they just try and find enough dollars to pay for the \$5-billion tax cut which is the altar, as my colleague has said, this government worships at.

But you'd think they'd have taken just enough time to realize that this was not a program that was costing government money. You couldn't really save the \$1.7 million they originally cut from this program. It wasn't a saving for government because every one of those dollars invested in this program gave the government back \$1.23 in revenue.

I see the member for Perth is holding up a red book, a commitment we made in the election campaign to this very program, to the Ontario film investment program which we recognized as being important to supporting the film and television industry in Ontario.

We believed this program was important because we knew that it was the source of support for an industry that was generating \$500 million in annual economic activity in this province, but more than that, we knew that every single dollar invested in this program was stimulating \$8.30 in economic activity, and more than that, we knew there were some 2,000 jobs that were being created on an annual basis by the development of the film and television industry in this province. We knew this was the sole area in which there was job growth during a recessionary period, so we wanted to be sure that film and television production was encouraged as the thriving industry it had become in Ontario.

I heard the parliamentary assistant say in presenting this bill that Toronto has become the home of one of North America's major TV and film production industries, and that is true. We believe that should be protected and encouraged and developed. We see the strength of Toronto's television and film production industry when we see, as we travel the streets, as we come to work in the Legislature, the television crews and the cameras out. What we don't see is all the backup industry and business that's supported. We don't see the technical equipment

people, the technical equipment providers, the suppliers. We don't see the hotel and restaurant business that gets a boom because of the sheer number of people who are coming in in relationship to TV and film productions.

We thought it was important and we were extremely concerned when this government began cutting the program, cutting the film development corporation budget by some 33%, cutting the film investment program initially by \$1.7 million. We were concerned because we realized this government had not understood the value of this industry to this province and why it was necessary for government to continue to provide support.

I think what happened to this program is that it didn't just go the way of blind cost cutting. We've seen that happen to other programs. We've seen that happen to programs where they'll shut down a Ministry of Environment lab and then end up having to spend more dollars for the tests in the private sector. We've seen this government shut down OPP garages and end up having to spend \$20,000 more a year for the same service it was providing before. We know that they're not doing a lot of economic analysis, that they're just cutting costs blindly.

But I think what happened to this particular program is that it was victim to blind ideology, that this is a government that says: "We're not going to have any kind of subsidies to business no matter what the business is, no matter how good the business is for the province of Ontario and its economy, no matter that this is a business which is actually paying back every dollar invested with \$1.23. None of that's going to matter. We don't subsidize business in any way, shape or form, so we're getting out of the Ontario film investment program."

My concern is what's going to happen now. I'm personally convinced that the loss of that program is going to cost us productions, it's going to cost us jobs that come with film and television production and it is going to cost us economic development — and economic revenue for this government, and that indeed is ironic.

I don't think the tax credit is an adequate substitute; I don't think the tax credit is going to stack up to make us competitive, to help us have that competitive advantage the parliamentary assistant spoke of earlier today. That's why the program was put in place as a two-year pilot

program: to see whether or not that would give us a competitive advantage, that it would match the programs in Quebec and British Columbia so that television and film production would come here and not to other provinces. The program worked, the program proved itself, we did become a major North American centre, and I'm afraid we're going to lose that. We already saw, when the cuts began, productions leaving Ontario that were scheduled to come here. I don't think we'll ever be able to measure how much we have lost in television and film production that would have come to Ontario if that program had stayed in place.

I don't think the tax credit program is a reasonable substitute, because it only rewards successes at the end of the day. Big producers, the ones who are clearly successful, will still get some benefit, but it will not help to encourage new productions and the risk of new productions. It won't provide that upfront investment that's necessary to get new productions off the ground. That support for risk is needed, and I say again there was no risk for government in keeping this program going because it was a moneymaker for government. It had proven itself; it deserved to be made permanent; it deserved to have increased funding from \$15 million to \$25 million to meet the demand that was there because of this growing industry. That is what we had committed to, I say to the member for Perth, that's what we believed would have helped jobs, it would have helped revenue and it would have kept us world-class. I am sorry we've lost it.

The Acting Speaker: Ms Bassett has moved third reading of Bill 70, An Act to provide Co-operative Education and Film Industry Tax Credits, to create Economic Growth, to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget and to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister of Finance.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

It being 6 o'clock, I adjourn the House until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Ed Doyle
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
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Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Marland, Margaret (PC)
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Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Maves, Bart (PC)
Eglinton	Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)		Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)		Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Chris (PC)		Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition		Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)		Patten, Richard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)		Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)		Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		Ruprecht, Tony (L)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Hon / L'hon Ed (PC) Speaker / Président
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
		York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 3 October 1996

Jeudi 3 octobre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 octobre 1996

The House met at 1003.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): Honourable members, it is my duty to announce to you that there is a vacancy in the office of the Speaker by way of resignation of the Honourable Ed Doyle. It is therefore my duty to call upon you to elect one of your numbers to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Therefore, I ask for nominations for the office of Speaker.

Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre): I wish to place in nomination the name of the member for Mississauga South, Margaret Marland.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): I rise in my place to second the nomination of the member for Mississauga South, Margaret Marland.

Clerk of the House: Mrs Marland, do you accept the nomination?

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I accept the nomination with pleasure.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have pleasure in putting in nomination the name of Gilles Morin, the member for Carleton East, as Speaker of the House.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I second the nomination of the member for Carleton East, Gilles Morin, for the office of Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Mr Morin, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East): Yes, I accept. Oui, j'accepte.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): I nominate Derwyn Shea, the member for High Park-Swansea.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I second the nomination of Derwyn Shea for the position of Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Mr Shea, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I accept.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I move the nomination of Jack Carroll, the member for Chatham-Kent, for the position of Speaker.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I second the nomination of Jack Carroll for the position of Speaker.

Clerk of the House: Mr Carroll, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I do, with thanks.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): It gives me great honour to move that Chris Stockwell, member for

Etobicoke West, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): I would like to second the nomination of the member for Etobicoke West, Chris Stockwell.

Clerk of the House: Mr Stockwell, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West): I do.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): I, Bert Johnson, move, seconded by Ted Chudleigh, that David Tilson, member of the electoral district of Dufferin-Peel, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): I rise in my place with honour to second the nomination of David Tilson, member for Dufferin-Peel.

Clerk of the House: Mr Tilson, do you accept the nomination?

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I do.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I move that the member for the electoral district of Kitchener-Wilmot, Gary Leadston, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand): I'm pleased and honoured to second the nomination of Gary Leadston as Speaker of the House.

Clerk of the House: Mr Leadston, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): I'd be honoured to accept it.

Clerk of the House: Further nominations?

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I, John Parker, move, seconded by Marion Boyd, that Floyd Laughren, member for the electoral district of Nickel Belt, do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): It's my honour and pleasure to second the nomination of the member for Nickel Belt.

Clerk of the House: Mr Laughren, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): With appreciation to my nominator and seconder, yes.

Clerk of the House: Are there any further nominations? If not, I declare the nominations closed.

If I could have your attention, please, while the lists are being prepared — a list will be posted in each ballot box — I'm going to take a few moments just to outline again what the general procedure is for voting.

Members on my left should exit through that far corridor, go out into the lobby, come back here and accept ballots, come to a voting booth and deposit their ballots, after filling them out with the name of the

candidate they want to vote for, into the ballot box at the end of the table. The doors will be open at all times. Members are free to come and go. We would like members to follow this process to try and speed it up and do it as quickly as possible. It could be a long day and I ask for your patience. We will cooperate. If you have any questions during the day, we will be more than pleased to answer them.

There will be bells. The way it will happen is that when I see that most of the people have voted, I will give a deadline. I will announce that the polls will close in about five minutes. Once I'm satisfied that everybody who wanted to vote has voted, the polls will be closed. The counting will take place in another room. Five minutes before the count is announced on each ballot, I will ring the bells so that you will know to come back to hear the results of the ballot and to witness the declaration of an election or to go on to a further ballot.

If the members want to proceed, we can begin with the first ballot. Voting can begin now.

1025

Clerk of the House: Attention, please. The polls will be closing at 10:30, in approximately three minutes. Would those of you who have not voted who are in the chamber please come and do so right now, or if you know of people who want to vote who are nearby.

1055

Clerk of the House: We will now proceed to a second ballot and I will proceed to name the names who are left on the second ballot. They are listed by alphabetical order. After I have done so, any of the members who still remain on the ballot and who wish to withdraw may do so. If not, we will go on with the vote with the names I have read out.

Mr Jack Carroll, the member for Chatham-Kent; Mr Floyd Laughren, the member for Nickel Belt; Mr Gary Leadston, the member for Kitchener-Wilmot; Mrs Margaret Marland, the member for Mississauga South; M. Gilles Morin, the member for Carleton East; Mr Derwyn Shea, the member for High Park-Swansea; and Mr Chris Stockwell, the member for Etobicoke West, are the remaining candidates in the second ballot.

Are there any of those who wish to withdraw at this point? Not seeing any, we will now proceed to the second ballot. If you'll just hold your seats, it'll take a few minutes' wait until the ballot boxes are back on the table and to get the candidates' list back into the ballot box.

1120

Clerk of the House: Voting for the second ballot is now closed and I would ask that the scrutineers and the counters remove themselves with the ballot box to the counting room, please.

1146

Clerk of the House: We will need a third ballot and I will proceed to announce the names of those candidates remaining on the third ballot by alphabetical order:

Mr Floyd Laughren, Nickel Belt; Mr Gary L. Leadston, member for Kitchener-Wilmot; Mrs Margaret Marland, member for Mississauga South; M. Gilles Morin, member for Carleton East; Mr Derwyn Shea, member for High Park-Swansea; and Mr Chris Stockwell, member for Etobicoke West.

Are there any of the candidates I've just named who wish to withdraw at this point? Seeing none, we will proceed to the third ballot.

1228

Clerk of the House: We will need a fourth ballot and here are the names, listed by alphabetical order, of the candidates remaining for the fourth ballot: Mr Floyd Laughren, member for Nickel Belt; Mrs Margaret Marland, member for Mississauga South; M. Gilles Morin, member for Carleton East; Mr Derwyn Shea, member for High Park-Swansea; and Mr Chris Stockwell, member for Etobicoke West.

Are there any of those candidates I have just named who wish to withdraw from the ballot at this time? Seeing none, we will proceed to a fourth ballot.

1240

Clerk of the House: The fourth ballot will be closed at 12:45. All members who are not in the chamber and who have not voted are asked to do so.

1245

Clerk of the House: Voting on the fourth ballot is now terminated. The counters and the scrutineers will now retire to the counting room.

1310

Clerk of the House: We will need a fifth ballot. I will read out the names of the remaining candidates in alphabetical order: Mrs Margaret Marland, Mississauga South; M. Gilles Morin, Carleton East; Mr Derwyn Shea, High Park-Swansea; Mr Chris Stockwell, Etobicoke West.

Do any of the candidates I have just named want to withdraw at this time? Seeing none, we will now proceed to a fifth ballot.

1320

Clerk of the House: Voting on the fifth ballot will terminate at 1:30. Any member not having voted is encouraged to do so.

1330

Clerk of the House: Voting on the fifth ballot is now terminated.

The scrutineers and the counters will now remove themselves to the counting room.

1355

Clerk of the House: A sixth ballot will be necessary. I will proceed to read the names of the candidates remaining on the ballot, in alphabetical order: Mrs Margaret Marland, Mississauga South; M. Gilles Morin, Carleton East; Mr Chris Stockwell, Etobicoke West.

Are there any of the candidates whom I have just named who would wish to withdraw at this time? Seeing none, we will proceed to a sixth ballot, but I would ask everyone to make sure they print the names very legibly, and please move along the other sides to the voting booths.

1415

Clerk of the House: Voting on the sixth ballot is now terminated. I would ask the counters and the scrutineers to retire to the counting room.

1437

Clerk of the House: We will need a seventh ballot. The candidates remaining on the seventh ballot, listed by alphabetical order, are the following: Mrs Margaret

Marland, member for Mississauga South; Mr Chris Stockwell, member for Etobicoke West. I would ask members to proceed to a final ballot.

1506

Clerk of the House: I declare that the voting on the seventh ballot is now terminated. The scrutineers and counters will now leave to count the ballots.

1531

Clerk of the House: Members of the House, you have elected as your Speaker the Honourable Chris Stockwell, member for Etobicoke West.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Sit down, please. I would like to thank the people of this Legislature. It's one thing to be elected at large in your riding. I've done that four or five times and that certainly is a memorable experience. To be elected by a group of your peers is a different memorable experience but equally cherished.

I want to thank every member who ran for Speaker. Each and every one of them, I will say, performed that election with dignity and fairness, and I think every member who stood in their place and how they voted was indicative of the type of House or Legislature we have. We are partisan by nature, we come here with political agendas, but when it comes down to decent, fairminded individuals, I don't think the people could have elected 129 better people. Thank you very much.

I just would like to say one quick thing. My wife and two children came down today. Charlene and Kale and Victoria, you can stand. I think I can allow that.

This House is adjourned during pleasure.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me. If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the assembly, whose servant I am.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I am commanded by the honourable the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the assembly to Her Majesty's person and government and is confident that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance and prudence.

1540

Prayers.

The Speaker: We'll proceed with members' statements.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I think the people from the three political parties would like to extend to you our congratulations. The process has been very challenging. We've gone through a number of ballots today. We have had excellent candidates who have allowed their names to stand for the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

As a representative of the official opposition, I would like to convey to you our sincere congratulations and our

very best wishes as you assume some very onerous responsibilities.

You have people who are deputies, who are very capable people as well, who will be of great assistance to you. I know that the people who are at the table will be more than happy to assist you on many occasions. I'm sure you will have the cooperation of members of all three political parties as you assume this very challenging and sometimes difficult responsibility as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to extend our congratulations to you and to all of the candidates who allowed their names to stand for the position of Speaker.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the New Democrats, I would like to add our words of congratulations to you and best wishes for success in the exercise of your high office. I just would say that we regret the fact that we will no longer have the opportunity to hear your insightful and energetic interventions in the debate. I want to remind you, though, that as Speaker you must sit in that chair and you can't move around.

I want also to say that we congratulate all of the members of the House who ran for the office of Speaker. All of them deserved and got considerable support, which is one reason we went through so many ballots. All of them could have served in your position, I'm sure you'd agree, and will be willing to work with you to ensure that the business of the House is carried on in a dignified and expeditious manner, keeping in mind that the rights of the minority will always be protected.

Hon David Johnson: Mr Speaker, as a person who has known and served with you for many years, I'm delighted to stand in my place and on behalf of everybody today, including all the members on this side, add congratulations to you.

The member opposite mentioned that they would miss your insightful and energetic interventions. I was thinking perhaps I could make the same comment from this side, but I'm sure, having known you from the past and your dedication and insight into the political process, and your knowledge of the rules and fairness and wit and many other excellent characteristics, that you will take hold of this office and give a new meaning to the word "Speaker" in the provincial Legislature.

I want to remind you that is a no-smoking chair. That may be a slight problem you encounter over the course of the next several months.

You do bring with you the confidence of all the members of this House. We're looking forward to working with you. We're looking forward to your leadership.

Applause.

The Speaker: Thank you. I'd like to personally thank the members for St Catharines, Algoma and Don Mills. I am very pleased and hopeful that this will be a less rowdy place to be. Maybe if we can just calm down a little it would be helpful, and you know I would have cooperated.

Applause.

1550

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Because things are somewhat unusual today, normally

before we come into the House we would know which ministers are definitely going to be here for questions during question period, and I just want to determine that the ministers currently present will be here for question period.

Hon David Johnson: This is a problem today because, as you might guess, many of the ministers some time ago, even before this process was set into place, have made other arrangements, so there will be a number of ministers missing.

I believe that the list that has been brought from the opposition ranks — I'm not sure if the third party has seen this list. Absent are about seven ministers and there are a couple of question marks who aren't on this list. I believe, and I'll just check and see if anybody who's in their seat at the present time — will everybody be here through the proceedings? The Premier, I know, is in another meeting which was scheduled, and it will be most difficult for him to be here. I think what you can count on is what you see at the present time.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr House Leader. Let's move to members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Mr Speaker, congratulations.

After tomorrow morning, Thunder Bay will forever be changed. You see, tomorrow the Health Services Restructuring Commission will deliver its final verdict regarding the future of health services for my community and northwestern Ontario.

I have risen repeatedly in this House, as has my colleague from Fort William, to object to the offensive reductions in hospital beds and health care services for the people of northwestern Ontario. I rose recently to protest against the minister who claims that this is a non-political commission, at arm's length from the ministry, then asks his deputy minister to write the commission, endorsing the recommendations made on June 27. This action by the ministry makes a mockery of the appeals process and is a direct insult to the thousands who have eloquently appealed this decision based on a sense of fear for the future.

Yesterday, the final insult was delivered that typifies the minister's and the commission's true nature. The commission has agreed to brief provincial members of Parliament on their final report but only after they've briefed the hospital CEOs, after they've briefed the media and after they've conducted a closed-door interview session with the media.

This is a deliberate attempt by the commission and the minister to control the reporting of this incredibly important event. I'm outraged that my privilege as a member of this House and as the duly elected representative of the people of Port Arthur has been ignored and trampled on by a non-elected body that is making major changes in my community but has absolutely no accountability to the people it will affect.

ONTARIO HYDRO

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Mr Speaker, may I add my words of congratulations and say that I'll miss you from the CBC panel. It was going to be good, but anyway.

Mike Harris and the Conservatives want to pull the plug on Ontario Hydro: move to privatize it, move to sell it off to their friends. When they do that it means we're all going to end up with higher rates. That's because the private owners want profit, understandably. Hydro's own studies show that rates will be going up by 32% under private ownership and the Harris Conservatives plan on selling off Hydro's most efficient and profitable water-powered stations with the lowest operating costs. That means the Conservatives' corporate friends will make big bucks on cheap power while the taxpayer rates go up.

If you take a look at who wins, you know who it is; it's the folks who are going to make the money from the selloff, it's the commissions that'll go to the bankers and the profits that'll be skimmed off the top.

If you look at who loses, it's the rest of us. It's not their big-buck friends, it's the ratepayers who are going to have to pay more; small business owners whose rates will go up; northern communities who are going to see their rates double; farmers who are going to be especially hard hit and all of us who care about the environment who are going to see deregulation and privatization gut the protections that we've worked so long and so hard for.

The Tories often talk loudly and proudly about their so-called Common Sense Revolution. Let me tell you, to us on this side of the House, the New Democrats, who will be holding hearings across the province, we say selling off Hydro makes no sense at all.

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): Mr Speaker, likewise, congratulations on your election as Speaker.

Earlier this month my colleague Helen Johns, MPP for Huron and parliamentary assistant to Health Minister Wilson, announced the next step in our government's three-year plan to repatriate the remaining 66 people with acquired brain injuries back to Ontario from US facilities.

In addition to our government's ongoing reinvestment of health care dollars, this initiative includes the allocation of up to \$2.8 million in funding this year as part of the program involving seven community providers, including Dale Head Injury Services Inc, located in London and serving southwestern Ontario. Dale Services has responded enthusiastically to the government's announcement by describing it as both positive and a progressive step.

As all members know, ABI persons may require specialized rehabilitation for months or years; rates of recovery differ with each person. However, proper care and support can promote significant recovery and quality of life. Our government's announcement will enable ABI persons to receive this treatment and care back home, closer to their families and friends.

I wish Dale Services much success in their continued efforts to serve ABI persons.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today I received a copy of a letter from a young teacher. I'd like to read a few excerpts from it.

"Dear Mr Snobelen,

"Just a friendly reminder from your employer. I am concerned about your job actions since you have been in the position of Minister of Education. In the beginning, you really had my eyebrows raised. Now I am ready to issue you a layoff notice.

"I am a young teacher. I realize that I only paid \$40,000 for my education and spent four years in university. As I expected, upon graduation, I sent out 200 résumés and received very few responses. There are thousands of others just like me.

"With regard to your proposed cuts: simply start cutting responsibly. Stop cutting where it hurts most, at the level of students and teachers. Here are some suggestions from your employer. I suggest you consider them carefully as we, the constituents, are the ones that decide if you will be permanently laid off just as you have done to many other young, energetic and intelligent teachers.

"Consider the 85 factor for teacher retirement.

"Stop looking at public education as a business. These children are our future.

"Give credit where credit is due. You have almost completely destroyed all of the teacher morale in this province.

"Stop coming up with changes to the education system on a whim. It seems like you come up with these insane ideas on a weekly basis.

"I realize that I am just an average person but it is the average people like me who got you elected. What future is there for a person like me?"

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I want to return to the continuing crisis at the family support plan, a crisis which the Attorney General would rather ignore than admit is of his own making. The fact is that women and children who used to receive support payments on a regular basis are now not. That's a direct result of the cuts made by this Attorney General in his haste to help finance the tax cut.

This Conservative government closed the eight regional FSP offices in August and at the same time the Conservatives also laid off 290 experienced FSP staff. There is not enough staff left to deal with the FSP caseload and that means that money legally owing to families across Ontario is not making it into the hands of women and children who need it.

Last week I pointed out that my office had received only eight responses to 50 inquiries we had made on behalf of constituents to the Ministry of the Attorney General. After raising this, within 24 hours I received a letter with information on 21 cases. The only problem is that the ministry forgot to provide us with the case numbers and the names of the clients involved, so we can't match our inquiries to the responses we received.

My staff faxed the whole letter back to the ministry last Friday asking for file numbers and for names. Today

we still have not received a response. We've now faxed 16 other inquiries to the minister on behalf of constituents and still no response.

This system is in a crisis and the Attorney General has got to admit it.

1600

SHOWPLACE PETERBOROUGH

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Mr Speaker, again, congratulations.

I rise in the House today to announce the grand opening of a truly splendid and remarkable community facility in Peterborough this coming Saturday.

On October 5, the people of Peterborough will be joined by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor for the grand opening of Showplace Peterborough. Showplace Peterborough will be Peterborough's centre for the performing arts, a place for Peterborough's own to showcase their talents and attract top performers from across North America and indeed from around the world.

The dream began back in April 1993 with the creation of its board of directors on a joint financing venture between all three levels of government to the tune of \$1.75 million. Showplace Peterborough even agreed to privately raise the city's portion of the funds and did so.

Personal and corporate involvement led Showplace to pass the \$1-million mark in their campaign by August 1995 and recently launched another campaign to raise the remaining \$800,000. This truly is a remarkable feat and worthy of applause.

I am proud to stand here today to thank every volunteer for making such a dedicated commitment to Showplace Peterborough and I wish them every success.

VACATIONLAND DAIRY

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): Mr Speaker, I too would like to congratulate you on taking the chair.

My statement is directed to the Minister of Northern Development today and it's a follow-up to a question that I asked him in the spring session. The minister will know that the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission has now opened up the northern dairy industry to big southern Ontario companies. The new policy, as the minister knows, will result in the loss of jobs in northern Ontario and the possible closure of local dairy companies such as Vacationland Dairy in my riding.

I think the question I have to ask of the minister is what kind of interventions he might have had being the advocate for the north, knowing the jobs that we need in the north, an advocate who would ensure that we do not lose jobs in terms of this new government anti-north — and I must say, it's an anti-north policy.

I have to ask him what kind of involvement he had when it came to Vacationland Dairy and what they would have to do in terms of preparing for the changes which I have indicated will cost northern jobs. I just hope that the minister will have looked at this, will have looked at it carefully, will know what it's going to do, not only in terms of the northern dairy industry but also in terms of jobs throughout the north.

I am worried. I am worried about Vacationland Dairy, which I have seen grow over many, many years. They have worked hard to come up with a plant that will service the needs of my constituents. Again, I can't impress upon the minister enough what it would have been for him to intervene in terms of holding these jobs in the north where they belong.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Congratulations, Mr Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Saturday, October 5, as having been declared World Teachers' Day by the United Nations and to add my voice of appreciation and support for this international recognition of our teachers. Teachers are the foundation of our education system and play the major role in the educational growth and development of our children and youth.

Second, the quality of education offered by our teachers in Sault Ste Marie particularly is indicated by the Reader's Digest choice of six White Pines Collegiate teachers as Canada's top educators. John Ferguson, Robert Moore, Ken and Myra Piirtoniemi, Wendy Piper and Pam Torgerson are winners of the 1996 Reader's Digest Leadership in Education Awards for their outstanding work on the Lake Superior Basin project.

I wish to recognize the dedication and commitment of all our teachers as they encourage our students to reach their full potential. These recognized individuals are yet another example of why our children receive a world-class education here in Ontario.

TYRONE MILL

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I'd like to extend my personal congratulations, Mr Speaker Stockwell.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the Legislature an important event that is taking place this Saturday in my riding of Durham East. On October 5, the Tyrone Mill in Tyrone will be celebrating their 150th anniversary.

Over the years the Tyrone Mill has changed owners and the type of business. The mill is an excellent example of a small business and its ability to survive in today's economy. Its key to continued success has been achieved by the owner's insight and ability to adapt to the changing needs of the community.

In the beginning, the business at Tyrone Mill was flour. Today, owner Bob Shafer operates the mill as an apple cider business and a sawmill. The mill continues to be powered by water.

Along with being a successfully run business, the Tyrone Mill is a historic landmark. It is the oldest mill in the region of Durham.

I'd like to extend my thanks to Bob Shafer, the owner, for his interest, hard work and commitment in preserving a piece of our Ontario heritage. Congratulations on a successful small business, one of which I am very proud.

I again welcome all members of the Legislature to Tyrone Mill's 150th anniversary on October 5. Come and enjoy the spirit and history of a rural riding.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): Congratulations on your election, Mr Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise to inform the House that our government is proclaiming this Saturday as World Teachers' Day in Ontario. October 5 was designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as a day to acknowledge the valuable contribution teachers make to our society. Our government is joining jurisdictions around the world in recognizing the commitment, creativity and caring of the teaching profession.

On this special occasion, I'm also pleased to acknowledge and recognize the presence today in our chamber of Mrs Eileen Lennon, first vice-president of the executive of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, and Mrs Margaret Wilson, registrar of the new Ontario College of Teachers, who are here today representing the teachers of Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature.

As I visit schools throughout the province and speak with students and parents, I am continually impressed with the significant role teachers play in our young people's lives. I'd like to express my admiration for these men and women who inspire, challenge, guide and encourage our young people so they can become confident, knowledgeable and productive citizens.

In saying this, I recognize the increasing demands that are being placed on our teachers. When our society is faced with pressures, we often turn to teachers to be the problem-solvers who can cure all ills.

I would say to the teachers of Ontario that I am committed to changes in our education system that will enable you to work as effectively as possible. I want to ensure that our resources are directed to the classroom, not buried in layers of administration. Let me assure you that I value your dedication and to work with you to ensure that our children get the highest quality education possible.

Today, I'm delighted to have this opportunity to pay tribute to Ontario's teachers. You are the lifeblood of our education system, bringing vitality and energy to the classrooms of Ontario. It's through your hard work —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): There's too much yelling and shouting. If you would like to do that, then you're welcome to go outside. You're not welcome to do it in here. Would you please bring yourselves to order.

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): If I do it outside, Snobelen won't hear me.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I have become somewhat —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I've spoken in reply to some things that I've heard and I'd like to warn the member for Sudbury and the member for Welland-Thorold that I'll not warn either one of them again — not once.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me repeat that today I am very delighted to have had this

opportunity to pay tribute to Ontario's teachers. You are the lifeblood of our education system, bringing vitality and energy to the classrooms of Ontario. It's through your hard work and commitment that our students are gaining the skills and knowledge that will prepare them for a future of promise.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I hope the Minister of Education will indeed choose to celebrate World Teachers' Day on Saturday. I hope he will celebrate it by at least refraining for a day from mentioning his personal goal of taking \$1.2 billion out of the educational system. I hope that instead of talking about that he will sit quietly and think about his plan to take \$600 million more out of the educational system and how many more teachers will be laid off if he carries out that plan and what that will mean to education and to students.

1610

I hope the Minister of Education will celebrate teachers' day by setting aside his inflammatory statements about Ontario's overpaid and underworked teachers. In John Snobelen's view, as we have seen, trained teachers can be replaced by a teenage supervisor of hamburger production at McDonald's.

I find Mr Snobelen, the Minister of Education, to be rather hypocritical in the words he gives this House today. They're hypocritical words coming from the man who set out to create a crisis in education and succeeded beyond even his most remote imaginings. He is right when he says that there are increasing demands on teachers in Ontario, and those demands are being placed on teachers because of the cuts that he and his government have condoned.

I would like to truly celebrate teachers today. I'd like to celebrate teachers, starting with a music teacher I had in grade 9 — so it was many years ago — who said, "You know, you should think about going to university," and changed my life, as I know countless teachers across this province change the lives of thousands of young people every year.

I want to celebrate my daughters' teachers, most particularly the ones who saw the uniqueness in each of my children and found the ways to draw that out.

I want to celebrate teachers in today's classrooms in Ontario, many of whom are struggling with classrooms of 40 students and are still trying to find a way to respond to the individual needs and the strengths of each young person.

I want to celebrate the teachers who are constantly searching for new ways to help students learn and new ways to create excitement about learning, and I want to celebrate the teachers who patiently work with special needs students, trying to give them that extra measure of understanding and encouragement they need to be able to continue.

I want to celebrate the teachers whose contribution to young people can't be measured solely by the hours they spend in the classroom, but have to be measured too by the countless hours they spend counselling and coaching and mounting drama productions and providing teacher assistance and organizing clubs.

I believe we have a lot to celebrate in Ontario when we recognize teachers. We have come a very long way in

meeting the very idealistic goals of public education, the goal of giving each child an equal opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

Teachers in this province understand how good our education system is and they understand why it is good. They understand because, without any question at all, the achievements of education in Ontario are the achievements of Ontario's teachers.

I wish that the minister understood how good our school system is, not because it doesn't need to change but because any changes that he contemplates should be based on a clear understanding of what is good about our education system and what needs to be valued. I wish the Minister of Education understood that it is indeed teachers who provide education to students. You cannot value education and devalue teachers.

The minister talks of making changes that enable teachers to work effectively. I suggest to him that he start by truly valuing teachers, because you can't make effective change in education without them.

Mr Frank Micalash (Kenora): I would like to follow up on some of my leader's comments and say to this minister that for all the nice things he said about teachers today, that will not make up for what he has said about teachers in the past. It just won't work, Minister.

As I travel from school to school I hear that teachers are becoming demoralized. They are saying they cannot take it any longer — cannot take the criticism they face on a daily basis.

I spent 10 enjoyable years in the classroom, but from what I hear from teachers today I am fearful. I am fearful about what you are doing to that profession, about what will be in that classroom should I choose to go back into it.

Minister, we have some very, very dedicated professionals in the classroom, and I would just hope that you would take the time to go around and speak to them to find out what their needs are, how they are feeling about what you are doing in terms of education and in terms of the students who face these teachers every day.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to respond to the minister's statement acknowledging the declaration of October 5 as UNESCO's World Teachers' Day.

I listened very carefully to the minister's statements, as I attempt to listen to all of his musings, and I'm interested in the fact that he says he is "continually impressed with the significant role that teachers play in our young people's lives." And he wants to express his "admiration for these men and women who inspire, challenge, guide and encourage our young people so that they can become confident, knowledgeable and productive citizens." I hope the minister is sincere in that statement.

I note that he says he recognizes the increasing demands that are being placed on our teachers. All of us recognize that in the modern society there are more and more demands being made on teachers' time, both inside the classroom and outside the classroom. But those demands are also being complicated by the changes this government and this minister are making with regard to

funding our education system. If the minister is really seriously concerned about the demands on teachers' time, why is it he continually goes around the province, until today, saying that teachers are overpaid and under-worked?

Perhaps it can be best expressed by a letter I received just today from a young teacher in Richmond Hill. I'll just read portions of it. It's addressed to Mr Snobelen. It says: "Just a friendly reminder from your employer. I am concerned about your job actions since you have been in the position of Minister of Education. In the beginning you really had my eyebrows raised. Now I am ready to issue you a layoff notice. Your job is to represent the people and to implement their ideas. You are failing to do your job. Thank you for providing such a bright future for young and intelligent teachers. Maybe we should say forget it, quit school and just start assembling cars because we can't get jobs."

Further on she says: "Stop looking at public education as a business. These children are our future. When was the last time you visited typical classrooms throughout the province? Remember that one of our boards was recently voted the best education system in the world. Give credit where credit is due. Teachers are constantly trying to boost children's self-esteem. You have almost completely destroyed all of the teacher morale in this province. The best education in the world costs money, and we are getting tremendous value for our education dollar. Stop coming up with changes to the education system on a whim. It seems like you come up with these insane ideas on a weekly basis."

This is a letter that was written from the heart by a very demoralized and discouraged young teacher who wants to help young children in our province to achieve the best they can and to reach their potential.

The minister says he's "committed to changes in our education system that will enable you" — meaning teachers — "to work as effectively as possible." Let's understand what that means. What the minister is essentially saying is, "We want to ensure that you work more." That's what he really means when he says "to enable you to work as effectively as possible." That's essentially what he means. He doesn't believe that teachers work hard enough.

He says he wants to ensure that resources are directed to the classroom, and yet he took \$400 million out of education last year, which annualized works out to almost \$1 billion; and this year he apparently wants to take something like \$600 million more out of public education in our province.

He then goes on to say, "I value" the teachers' "dedication and want to work with you to ensure that our children get the highest quality education possible." The teachers are "the lifeblood of our education system."

These words sound awfully hollow to teachers in Ontario today. They want a Minister of Education who is a minister for education, who advocates for education, and doesn't continually attack the system for which he is responsible.

1620

ORAL QUESTIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): I will place my first question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. First I want to return to the issue we raised with you yesterday, when we revealed the plans that are being developed in some secrecy within your ministry which include consideration of the charging of new user fees for the disabled who want to take advantage of vocational rehabilitation services, the kind of training that will help these people find jobs.

You had at least three opportunities in yesterday's media scrums to rule out categorically user fees for the disabled and say, "We are not going to bring in user fees for the disabled." You refused to make those guarantees. You got angry at being found out that there was any indication that these kinds of discussions were going on within your ministry, but beyond your anger you didn't provide the disabled of this province with any guarantee at all.

Minister, you've had 24 hours to rethink your answer and, I hope, to rethink the kinds of discussions that are going on in your ministry. You've had an opportunity, I believe, to hear from some of the disabled who are outraged. I will give you another opportunity today. Will you guarantee that you will not bring in new user fees for the disabled?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I thank the honourable member across the way for this question. I know she is very concerned about this matter, as I am very concerned about this matter and the fear that has been provoked in the minds of many people in the disabled community.

This government, I suggest, does not make policy on the back of an envelope; we don't make policy on the fly. We consult, we listen and we're consulting again, which is exactly what we're doing in the disabled community. My predecessor met with an advisory committee that represented a wide range of people in the disabled community on many occasions. I am meeting with groups like the Ontario Association for Community Living, the Ontario March of Dimes, the Canadian Hearing Society, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the list could go on. I find it very difficult to understand how consulting with the groups most affected is considered as developing policy somehow in secret.

Because the honourable member seems to feel that we're not listening to what the disabled community has said, I suggest the SARC report from 1988, and if you look at the date, I believe that was the Liberal government's. The report said:

"One of the worst aspects of receiving social assistance is the stigma associated with the term 'welfare.' The stigma is felt equally by all recipients, disabled or not. The often severe difficulties and physical barriers that confront people...are compounded for social assistance recipients by the indignity of being treated as second-class citizens."

"The status of social assistance recipients with disabilities has led many to advocate that their income needs be met by some other program.

"The committee...agrees that disabled people should be removed entirely from the social assistance system."

Let me also quote another report, the Advisory Group on Persons with Disabilities to the Social Assistance Review Committee in 1987, also when Ms McLeod's government was in power: "That a universal income support system for disabled persons be established, that it be combined with an income-tested allowance that recognizes individual rights and family needs."

I could go on at great length. There is much documentation and there are many reports about how the disability community has asked governments to remove them off welfare and develop a special program that meets their needs. That continues to be the commitment this government gave when we were elected, that continues to be the commitment we are working on and that continues to be the commitment and guarantee that we give to the disabled community.

Mrs McLeod: The minister knows full well that the memorandum we saw yesterday had absolutely nothing to do with removing the stigma of welfare from the disabled of this province. It had everything to do with removing the support that the disabled in this province need, and that's why people are frightened. Minister, they are frightened that you are not going to consult with them until you have made your decision and are ready to impose user fees on them the way you imposed user fees on the disabled and seniors of this province for prescription drugs. That's the kind of consultation, after the fact, that they are very concerned about.

I take it, from the fact that you will not give a categorical assurance that you're not going to charge user fees for the disabled, that their fears are well founded, that they have reason to be concerned that they are going to be facing user fees when you bring out your report. The other fear we've heard today and yesterday is from people who fear they're going to be denied any kind of support at all, because you're no longer going to consider them to be disabled as you change your definition. That's what the memorandum said. It talked about taking people off the list. It talked about limiting the amount of time people could get support.

Many of the people in the disabled community have already seen what's happened with the limitations that were placed on accessible transportation when the city of Toronto decided it had to find out how to kick the right people off the Wheel-Trans system, and the right people who got kicked off turned out to be kidney dialysis patients and stroke patients. They're very much afraid that's exactly what's going to happen to them.

Minister, I ask you to give these people the assurance; I ask you for another guarantee. Will you give a guarantee that your redefinition of the disabled is not going to result in a single person who is now receiving support as a disabled individual losing that support?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'd be quite happy to confirm or deny policy decisions when those policy decisions are made, but as I said yesterday and as I say again today, we are going to continue to consult with the disabled

community before we make final decisions. Are we developing proposals? Of course we are. We've been very clear about that for over the last year. Are we listening to what the disabled community has said? Are we considering the recommendations they have made? Absolutely.

For example, as I said, the advisory group on persons with disabilities talked about combining a new allowance with an income-tested allowance. We've got another quote from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind that suggested we have an income-based allowance. Those are recommendations. I think we should do them the courtesy of listening to those recommendations and of considering them. I would like very much to be able to confirm the policy details. I will be very pleased to do so after we've consulted and after we've made decisions.

Mrs McLeod: We had a consultation yesterday because our phones were ringing off the hooks with members of the disabled community who were calling to register their outrage with the kinds of proposals you are considering to charge user fees and to change the rules for who qualifies for disabled support.

Minister, if you had bothered to consult with members of the disabled community, if you had heard anything they have to say, these proposals would never have been on the table because they are an affront to the disabled community. I ask you, as you talk about consultation, can you name one disabled group or even one disabled individual, can you name anyone outside your own ministry, who has told you that you should impose user fees on the disabled? Can you name anyone who thinks the best way to serve the disabled is to change the rules and deny people support?

Hon Mrs Ecker: As I have said, we have not made any decisions. We have been listening to the message the disabled community has been telling us. We will continue to do that. I find it passing strange that the member across the floor, when she had her own little red book some time ago, made a commitment, "We will begin our reforms by taking those who are disabled from the welfare system and giving them income support," and those are the proposals we are developing.

I suggest that if the member opposite has concerns about what is happening, perhaps she may wish to direct some of her concern to her federal colleagues. In the *Globe and Mail* today, it is reported that when they are looking at the Canada pension plan reforms, on the benefit side the federal proposals would tighten CPP eligibility for the disabled. Perhaps she might wish to raise her concern with her federal colleagues in Ottawa.

CHILD CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question is also to the Minister of Community and Social Services, but as I hear her responses and her professions of a willingness to consult on proposals that no one in the disabled community would ever consider giving support to, I worry how she will consult on the other area of responsibility in her ministry, and that is child care.

Minister, you have recently released a paper on child care reform, and in that paper you advocated less monitoring of licensed facilities, higher ratios for children as young as two years of age and lower wages for staff who are already paid poor salaries. Ironically, in this paper you also talk about the fact that funding for children's special needs is not responsive enough. I find it ironic because that's the same kind of individualized funding that Matthew Dolmage and other families receiving special services at home support need and that you are cutting.

1630

But what I find most offensive about your child care paper, Minister, is the title: Improving Ontario's Child Care System. Virtually every recommendation in that report will have a direct impact on the quality of child care in this province, and it will not be positive. Minister, can you explain to me how lower wages for already poorly paid staff, higher teacher-child ratios and less monitoring will improve the quality of child care?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): Again I repeat, since the honourable member seems to keep raising it, we have not cut the funding for the special services at home program.

In regard to child care, again, I believe the honourable member, with all due respect, has misread the document very seriously. It is not a document about less monitoring of licensed centres. It is not a document about lower wages. It is not a document about somehow disturbing the quality in child care centres. It is a document, a report, that takes a very complex system that is a very necessary system, that takes the amount of funding that we have dedicated, the \$600 million that we have set aside for child care, which is the largest amount that any government has dedicated to child care, and takes a look at how we can spend that money in the most effective way to protect child care support for the parents who need it, to protect the quality in the system, and to make sure that is done in a fair way and an equitable way for all the staff who are working in those programs.

Mrs McLeod: I'm not sure I have the memory for this, but I'm told that the last time this House talked about reducing child care standards in the province of Ontario, it was under the last Conservative government in 1975, when Margaret Birch was looking at increasing ratios and reducing standards. Twenty years later we have a new Tory government and we have the old fight back again.

Minister, one of the key initiatives in your paper, and I do not believe that I have misread it, is the reduction of \$4,500 in the wages of child care staff. This will mean that the average wage of child care staff will go from \$19,000 to \$14,500. Minister, those figures come from the 1991 Canadian census data as well as from a survey done by early childhood educators.

You indicate, Minister, that you want to create more access, more subsidized spaces for the working poor. But do you really believe the way to provide additional supports to the working poor is to make child care workers working poor? And in what way, Minister, does lowering wages help to recruit the trained staff that we need for child care?

Hon Mrs Ecker: With all due respect, if the honourable member had read the report, the honourable member would know that the report does not recommend lowering wages for child care workers. The decision for child care workers in terms of what their salaries should be is a decision between the employers and the employees. It is not a decision for this government to be making. There are no cuts in that money. That money is not being taken out of the child care system. That money is staying in the child care system. If that proposal is accepted, that money will stay in the child care system through a stabilization grant equally and fairly —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. There's too much noise. There are too many questions being asked and there's too much. I can't hear the answer.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Perhaps the honourable member across the way is saying she supports the current way that those particular subsidies are delivered to the system. Where there are employees in the system who are getting very low wages, there are others who cannot pay those wages because there isn't that support for the entire system. We think it should be fair. That is the goal that we are doing; that is the objective that we are trying to achieve with these proposals.

We will be consulting with the child care community. I had spent many, many months consulting beforehand to get their feedback. These are proposals. We will be consulting again, because I would like to hear their feedback before we make any final decisions, and I stand by that commitment.

Mrs McLeod: I can tell the minister that I do indeed support wage enhancement programs which would bring the salaries of child care workers up to a reasonable level, because I believe it's important to have well-paid, trained child care workers dealing with our young children. I particularly believe it is important, when we have a government that has abandoned any kind of commitment to pay equity, that we have some program in place which ensures there is going to be some reasonable compensation for child care workers. It is you, Minister, in your proposals, who is taking that wage enhancement away in order to subsidize, supposedly, a greater number of spaces.

I believe you have simply ignored all the research that tells us that quality child care benefits children and poor-quality child care has a negative effect on child development. We need well-trained and well-paid staff in our licensed facilities.

I find it ironic that you are planning to use the money saved from cutting salaries to create 12,000 new subsidized spaces. In my view, that's a clear sacrifice of quality for quantity, but I don't believe you're even going to get the quantity. You failed to mention that as a direct result of your government's cut to municipalities, we are going to lose 9,000 subsidized spaces by December 1996. So we're going to end up without more quantity, just less quality. Do you not realize, Minister, that that's what we'll have, less quality and no more quantity?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I guess one of the things that many governments that have wrestled with the child care field have found is that whenever someone tries to address the

problems that are in that system — and I heard a lot about the problems in that system from every group involved, including the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care — any change is somehow a quality issue, whether it is or not. Quality is extremely important in this sector. That's why the proposals in this report talk about tougher licensing and tougher standards, because we believe quality is extremely important and that is something that parents expect.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): In the absence of the Minister of Labour, my question is to the government House leader. Minister, a couple of hours ago I received a copy of a leaked cabinet submission dated September 17 of this year in which your Minister of Labour is recommending that your government mount a major attack on the rights of injured workers in this province.

For example, in this cabinet submission there's a recommendation that billions of dollars be cut from the benefits that injured workers receive and that billions of dollars in benefits go to your rich corporate friends. In this recommendation, it also suggests that workers be denied the right to claim for chronic stress. That, of course, would push that problem on to the public-paid health system as well as pushing many injured workers on to the welfare system.

In fact, this cabinet submission recommends denying a worker's right to the confidentiality of their medical records. To add insult to injury, this cabinet submission suggests that the bill be tabled, read for a first time, have second reading, third reading and royal assent by the end of this year.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, you will know that that kind of time frame will not allow for proper province-wide public hearings that injured workers are entitled to. My question to you as the government House leader is, will you withdraw this? But assuming that this is your game plan, will you at least assure injured workers that they will be given an opportunity to have a say in this and guarantee there will be province-wide public hearings on this submission?

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I'm not here to make any announcements on WCB reform, and the member opposite is not in a position to make any announcements either. What I will say is an obvious statement of fact, that Minister Jackson has reviewed this matter, has consulted with many involved in this field, has consulted extensively, has come forward with a report. The report has been considered by the minister.

I'll also say, to state the obvious again, that the workers' compensation system is a system that needs reform. There is a huge unfunded liability. The question is, how are injured workers served through a system that has a \$12-billion unfunded liability? How do we serve the injured workers of tomorrow through a system that

can't afford to give the kind of protection they think they deserve? How are the employers of the province of Ontario served by premiums that are among the highest in Canada, premiums that are higher than any other province other than the province of Newfoundland?

There will be reform to the workers' compensation system. The reform will be along the lines as outlined in the Jackson report, as outlined in the Common Sense Revolution, as we campaigned on during the election, and those reforms will come forward on a timetable announced by the minister.

1640

Mr Christopherson: Minister, this is not speculation. This leaked cabinet submission is signed by the Minister of Labour. It says very clearly what you intend to do, and for the record, it goes beyond even the horrible things the Jackson report recommended.

In your response to me, you started outlining an argument of why things should change. In the absence of your colleague the Minister of Labour here to debate the issue with me, I'm calling upon you today, as the government House leader, to ensure that the injured workers of this province can engage in the very debate that you started right now. I ask you again — you're the minister responsible for allowing legislative committees to go out on province-wide hearings — will you deny, first of all, that this is going to happen, in which case I don't have a third question. But if you're not prepared to do that, will you at least guarantee the injured workers of this province that they will have their democratic say and that you will hold province-wide public hearings before you mount this attack on injured workers?

Hon David Johnson: Again I'll reassure the member that there will be reform, as we promised. There will be reform, and reform is overdue in the workers' compensation scheme.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon David Johnson: This is a system which does not have in its present form the financial stability and capability to defend and to pay —

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): All he's asking for is public hearings.

The Speaker: The member for Welland-Thorold.

Hon David Johnson: — the injured workers in the years ahead. This is a system that is charging too-high premiums and killing jobs in the province of Ontario. So there will be reforms. I would also remind —

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the member for Welland-Thorold to withdraw that comment, please.

Mr Kormos: I withdraw it.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon David Johnson: I will also remind the member opposite that indeed, through the Jackson hearings that Mr Jackson held —

Mr Kormos: There were no hearings.

Hon David Johnson: Over 200 meetings. The minister has had over 200 meetings, and further, beyond those 200 meetings, many written submissions, and they involved injured workers, health workers, employers. They were very extensive, they were very comprehensive and they

involved a wide range of individuals concerned about this matter.

Mr Christopherson: My point in pushing the issue of public hearings at this stage is because there's a track record with this government of not wanting and allowing democratic debate.

This is the government that owns Bill 26. This is the government that killed the royal commission on WCB reform, gave it to Jackson. He disappeared underground for a year holding private, secret meetings — not public meetings, private secret meetings. This is the government that rammed through the anti-worker Bill 7 without one minute of public hearings.

This is the government that tried to ram through Bill 49, the amendments to the Employment Standards Act, which we forced into province-wide public hearings. As a result of that, you withdrew one of the more ugly aspects of what you were recommending after you'd said it was nothing but housekeeping. I might add that your own staff, when we were analysing this, offered up amendments, and when asked about them they agreed that yes, if they hadn't made those amendments, the law would be more confusing than it was before you introduced Bill 49.

So there's every reason in the world to hold province-wide public hearings, but the most important is that your track record of allowing a democratic voice is so tainted that the only trust people can have in what you do is if they get a chance to see it themselves and have a say for themselves.

My question to the minister is very straightforward, and has been from the first time I asked him. As a result of what's in this leaked cabinet document, as a result of your own disgusting track record in trying to muzzle democracy in this province, will you do the honourable thing and either assure us you won't do this, or guarantee us that workers will at least be allowed their democratic right to have a say and guarantee province-wide public hearings before you attack injured workers?

Hon David Johnson: I will say that this is a government concerned about the workers of the province of Ontario. This is a government which has brought forward measures to promote job creation in the province of Ontario. This is a government which has seen —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon David Johnson: — the increase of some 150,000 new jobs in the economy of the province of Ontario over the last year. Those jobs, I might say, have come through a number of measures: through the repeal of Bill 40, the labour bill; through the reduction in the income tax; through the removal of red tape and, yes, through the reform of the workers' compensation system which is long overdue.

Injured workers realize that they must have a stable financial situation. They realize that you cannot have a system with an unfunded liability of some \$16 billion. How can that support the injured workers of the future?

There will be reform in the system. There has to be reform in the system. Everybody realizes that. This is a government which has held about 200 meetings with injured workers, with health care workers, with

employers. This is a government which has listened to all sides to this issue and realizes that reform must be brought forward for the good of the workers who will be here in the province of Ontario in future years.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Mr Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you on your election this afternoon as Speaker of our House.

My question is to the Attorney General. Attorney General, repeatedly in this House you have come in and you've repeated over and over again that there's no problem in the FSP system, in light of your having fired 290 employees within the FSP system, with your having closed down the regional office of the FSP. You keep on saying there's no problems within the family support system.

I have a case within my riding that you say doesn't exist, and the case is quite simple. I have a father who's trying to make sure that his ex-wife and his children get the money they're entitled to through payments that he makes through his paycheque to her through the family support plan. You say those situations don't exist. But in this case, I've got Don Tremblay who has put a payment into the system that he has tried through August, September, and even his October payment to get over to his wife Elaine, and as a result of the changes you have made absolutely no money has gotten over to Elaine. She sits there now in Timmins having to borrow money from her family as best as she can to put food on the table for her kids, and is not able to pay the rent. What do you say to Elaine and her children?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The family support plan, as it is now known, as I indicated, had a difficulty some weeks ago. Those cheques have all been distributed and the family support plan at the present time is not holding any trust moneys on behalf of any individuals, save and except —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: — moneys that are in the suspensory account. And the moneys that are in the suspensory account are at a level commensurate with the level they have traditionally been at. As a result of that —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: Mr Speaker, if they want to hear the answer I'm really happy to give it to them. The suspensory account right now contains moneys in it for cheques that cannot be identified. That account is at a level commensurate with the level that it has always been at —

Interjections.

1650

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the members of the third party to please come to order. The minister is trying to answer the question. I appreciate the fact that you may not agree with his answer, but you've asked the question, please allow him to answer. Thank you.

Hon Mr Harnick: I can tell you, I can assure you because I check daily, the family support plan does not have any moneys in it that have not been distributed, save and except for moneys in the suspensory account. I would ask members to ensure that they urge their constituents to identify the cheques that they send to the family support plan so they can be transmitted as fast as possible. The cheques that are in the suspensory account are cheques that quite simply cannot be identified.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I say to the minister, don't you dare try to blame people who are sending cheques in for this problem. People who send their cheques in have been doing that on a regular basis. There has been no problem with these payments going to women and children who need it. That is the point we have been repeatedly trying to make in this House. As a result of your closing the offices and your laying off 290 staff, women and children who used to get support payments on a regular basis are now not and that's a fact.

I want to raise with you another case. Minister, you can shake your head all you want. You explain this case to me then. Jewell Brunette has been on the family support plan for a year now. She has a 10-year-old son. Up until your cuts in August, she received \$585.92 on a monthly basis. Since your cuts in August, she has not received her September payment nor her October payment. She's now behind on one mortgage payment. She's supposed to make another mortgage payment tomorrow and she can't because she doesn't have any money.

I want you to explain to Jewell Brunette and other women and families like her why you're financing the tax cut on her back and other families across this province.

Hon Mr Harnick: The member for Sudbury East has given me a list of cases that were a problem and I have provided her with answers to those questions and satisfied her and satisfied myself.

Ms Martel: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: That is patently untrue. I had to give them to him today because there's no file numbers or names on the cases. We don't even know whom they belong to. How can you say that?

The Speaker: Order. Although you may see that as a point of order, it may be a point of difference, but it's not a point of order. I ask the Attorney General to continue and I would ask for order from the third party, please.

Hon Mr Harnick: I have tried to provide the member for Sudbury East with the details of the cases that she has indicated are outstanding. She understands because we had a brief discussion about the difficulty of providing file numbers and names unless she provides me with an authorization from the individuals to do so.

If she has further matters that she wants me to look into I am happy to do that. I am not going to try to answer individual questions. But I have endeavoured to provide her with the answers to the cases and I can tell you —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I ask the member for Beaches-Woodbine — I see that as very unparliamentary language. I ask her to withdraw.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): If it's unparliamentary, I'll withdraw it. I don't recognize what's unparliamentary about it, but I'll withdraw it.

The Speaker: To the member for Beaches-Woodbine, I'll provide you with a list and I'm fairly certain you'll find that. Attorney General.

Hon Mr Harnick: If there are further items the member wants me to look at, I am happy to do that. But I have provided her with information as to the status of the cases and every one of them has been satisfied. I tell you that the problems that continue are problems that have existed with this plan from the beginning.

The Speaker: The member for London Centre.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): To the Attorney General: Minister, you keep claiming in this House that everything's okay with anything you've done. The reason you get cases every day is because your colleague the minister responsible for women's issues said, "Bring the cases to the minister and he'll explain them." Quite frankly, you keep telling us people have received money when we know they haven't. Yesterday you tried a magnificent damage control mechanism with your new family responsibility thing. There are many good things in that bill you presented yesterday, but what you didn't tell the people of Ontario and what you didn't tell the women who rely on the family support plan is about the mechanisms you've put into that bill to end their cases if they're hard or impractical for the FSP to continue to do.

It's absolutely outrageous that in your bill you suggest that arrears are uncollectible for a number of different reasons when the family support plan and even the SCOE plan over the last few years were able to do that. In your plan you say anything that is in arrears for a long period of time, and particularly before the SCOE plan came into place, will be considered uncollectible. You have put into your plan that no money can be collected from the estate of a deceased payor.

There are many different aspects of this which mean that you plan to make this plan look more efficient under your government by simply closing cases. Every time you close a case, it means that woman and those children do not get the support to which they're entitled. That encourages people to go on to welfare, because welfare is one of the ways you can close a case. It encourages people to evade payment, because then they will be declared to be uncollectible. You're doing this so that your pals at the Royal Bank don't have to spend too much money chasing down deadbeat dads.

The Speaker: Could I have the question, please, the member for London Centre.

Mrs Boyd: What mechanism are you going to put in place to make sure that all the cases, the most difficult cases, the ones that these plans were put in place for are not going to be closed by your director or, as the bill provides, the agency to which you are handing over the scheme, the Royal Bank? Shouldn't there be at least someone available to have a hearing if someone disputes this notion of your director or the agency to which you assign the case that it is uncollectible?

Hon Mr Harnick: I have a little difficulty taking a lecture from a person who was in charge of a plan that started out with \$300 million in arrears but five years later those arrears had shot to \$900 million. There wasn't a single, solitary move that they made while they were in government to permit the plan to have tools of collection

to stop that escalating debt and to put money in the hands of women and children. I will stake the amendments we have made, which will give the plan —

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The standing orders do say a minister or member is not able to mislead the House, and that is what the Attorney General is now doing in his statements.

The Speaker: I did not hear the member mislead the House. Go on, Attorney General.

Hon Mr Harnick: I will stake the enforcement tools we have put in that bill against anything they ever did as a government in terms of running the family support plan.

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Cochrane South, come to order, please.

CASINO RAMA RAIL SERVICE

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, in response to a question from a member of your own party, the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay —

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): A lob ball question.

Mr Colle: It was a lob ball question, a staged question — you stood up in this House and you praised the Rama express train that goes from Toronto up to Casino Rama and you talked about how this train was going to help solve the traffic mess that exists around Casino Rama. He asked you what you were going to do about this traffic crisis, this traffic mess up there.

1700

How could you stand up in this House yesterday and say that this train was so great and had great ridership when the same day, yesterday, your own GO Transit was cutting off this train? Did they not ask you? Did you not ask them? What kind of credibility does that give you when you stood up yesterday saying this train was great and meanwhile they were cutting off the train at the same time?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Mr Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations on your election as Speaker.

I am disappointed — and I guess there is a little bit of a solemn look on my face — because of what really did happen. What I did say yesterday was that I wanted to commend CN and the Rama people and GO for putting something of this nature together to see how we could help alleviate the traffic problems we are indeed having. I am disappointed that for some reason it hasn't worked. I've got to give the parties that thought about it and tried to put it together — I thought it was an excellent idea and I will still commend them for taking it up and trying it for two months.

I would like to follow up by saying to you that I'm going to take a look at the possibility, working with CN, to see if it might reconsider, along with the casino people and GO, because I believe it's a worthwhile service. Our highways cannot take that type of traffic jam. The area itself cannot take that traffic jam. I would like to encourage the motorists who elect to drive to reconsider and try

the train, if we are able to put the service back together again, because it is a great ride.

Mr Colle: We just wonder what is happening in your ministry. You stood up here yesterday as the Minister of Transportation saying how great this train was. You said, "GO Transit, along with CN Rail and Casino Rama, have started a new train service...which has been well received." They've been telling you the train's working well, and all of a sudden your own GO Transit, which is one of the partners, is at the same time saying: "There's no ridership. The train is a disaster because there's no ridership."

Are you ever in contact with GO Transit? Did you ask them whether or not the train should be pulled? What is the answer? How will you now do something about this traffic disaster near the casino since you pulled the train, or GO Transit pulled the train without letting you know? Whom are we to believe now? GO Transit? You? What do we do now? There's no train.

Hon Mr Palladini: It was not GO Transit that hired the service; it was GO Transit that took the opportunity to utilize equipment that was sitting idle. It was clearly Casino Rama that took the initiative in working out a deal with CN. CN was the operator of this transit, not GO. It was CN that operated the train and it was GO Transit equipment that was transporting the people up there.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Mr Speaker, my congratulations to you on your election to the position of Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I want to ask the minister about another leaked government document. There seems to be a pattern developing. This one is from the Ministry of Finance and it indicates that the government has already made the key decision regarding value-based province-wide reassessment of property taxes for 1998 and that the marching orders have been given. That is going on at the same time as Mr Crombie is supposedly out there consulting with people about exactly the very issue the government has already made up its mind on.

As if that wasn't bad enough, what we also know is that in this same government document there is no mention of any measures the government is going to take to ensure that people won't lose their homes and businesses as a result of this reassessment. Why are you charging ahead without saying what you'll do to help seniors, low-income people, tenants and the many other people who are going to be hit with big property tax increases and be seriously in danger of losing their homes and businesses?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and my congratulations as well on your election. I'm sure you're going to do a fine job.

To the member opposite, this is really rather humorous. They'd better do something about their leaked documents, because I had a press conference to announce all that about July 13, where we announced that this government

was accepting the Crombie recommendation to introduce a value-based system —

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Market value. Say it, Al. Market value.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Oakwood, come to order.

Hon Mr Leach: — an actual value-based system to be implemented province-wide and updated on a regular annual basis. If that's the kind of leaked documents they've got, they're in big trouble.

Mr Silipo: I found it interesting that the minister refused to use the term "market value," which was in there. More important, he refused to answer the question I asked him, which was, what measures is he taking to ensure that seniors and other low-income people are not going to lose their homes and businesses? That's what's going to happen.

I want to ask the minister particularly about another aspect of these changes. The city of Toronto, for one, believes that your system of market value assessment will tax properties at the so-called highest and best use. As the minister will know, that means that if you have a property that's zoned, for example, for a big office tower but on which you only have a small grocery store, you're going to get taxed under your new system at the higher use. That is going to ruin thousands of small businesses.

Because the minister can clarify this right here and now, I would like to ask him to confirm clearly that his new tax system will not tax properties at their highest and best use but will only tax those properties at the actual use, what they're actually being used for — not what they could be used for but what they are actually being used for. Will you commit to that, Minister?

Hon Mr Leach: I can assure the member that the Crombie panel has proposed and recommended mitigating strategies to ensure that the shift in taxes from the AVA system — a very fair and balanced system that has been long needed in this province, that no other government has had the guts to introduce, but we're going to do it. We're going to make sure there's an opportunity to phase in any shifts in taxes. We're going to ensure that seniors are protected. We're going to ensure that small business is protected. We're going to look at the taxes on businesses to make sure they're protected.

I can assure you that the system we're going to bring in, that will be introduced — the assessors now out in the field undertaking those assessments are going to bring a fair and equitable system into the assessment system in the province of Ontario.

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating you on your election. I know you'll carry out the functions of the office of Speaker with both trust and dignity.

My question today is for the Minister of Education and Training. Almost two weeks ago the minister announced the beginning of a consultative process to reform Ontario's secondary schools. This is a major initiative which will impact every member of the Legislature, including you, Speaker. Would the minister please outline to the

members what the secondary school reform consultations will be examining?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I want to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question. Before I address that, I think it's important that I straighten out for the record some comments earlier in the day in question period that may have inadvertently misled this House.

I was surprised somewhat — I'm sure this is accidental, but I'm shocked when the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Algoma may have inadvertently misled this House by saying that I had suggested that the teachers in the province of Ontario were somehow overpaid or underworked. For the record, to be clear, I have never made that comment. In fact, I have never made a comment that was not encouraging to the hardworking teachers of the province and I'm glad to have a chance to straighten the record today.

1710

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You are well aware, as all members are, that a member can correct his own record. He cannot correct someone else's record.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The point of order is well taken, member for Algoma. It's also a well-recorded fact that a member can answer the question any way they choose.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I'm pleased that the member for Scarborough Centre has asked about our secondary school reforms, because I, like many of my colleagues, am very excited about what we can accomplish with our secondary school program in Ontario. I agree, as my colleagues do, with the two royal commission reports that have suggested that we go to a four-year program and meet the rest of the provinces in the country, and I'm glad to be doing that.

As we've said very clearly to the people of Ontario, we'll be looking for demanding and relevant curriculum for our students —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I am answering, Mr Speaker, and I'm going as quickly as I possibly can, sir.

The Speaker: Okay, you're going to have to go quicker, I think.

Hon Mr Snobelen: I'm just dancing as fast as I can.

We're also interested in expanding or looking at expanding our co-op programs, which 60,000 students in Ontario now participate in. We're looking for high standards for those students who are going to university, but we're interested in the 70% of students who do not go to university or college after high school.

Mr Newman: Would the minister kindly inform the House as to how the consultative process will work and who will be invited to participate?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Unlike my colleague to my right, I have keen ears and was able to discern the question, so I won't ask the member for Scarborough Centre to repeat it. We are involved in a consultative process. We're looking for, of course, consultation from people who are active in the teaching profession, people who are active in the education community. We have received some of that in developing our secondary school program and our

recommendations. Now we're looking to get input from parents and students across the province: what kind of education system they want; what kind of secondary school system they want; what improvements they see to grade 9; what kind of co-op they want; what kind of testing we should have in our secondary school program, and what should be the core curriculum.

So I'm very pleased that the member for Wentworth North has taken on the responsibility of getting in contact with parents. We have, I think, a variety of response numbers for that, we have a mail-in on the back of our information sheet that we've sent to parents, and we are actively seeking out the opinions of parents and students as to what kind of secondary school system they think will fit their needs.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training as well. Minister, I indicated earlier on in the House today that I had been around speaking to a good number of teachers throughout the riding and throughout the north. I've been hearing a lot of comments regarding the way you're handling the education system and their unhappiness in the classroom.

But I think when it really hit home is when I spoke to a young person who I thought was the most dedicated teacher I have known since taking this job and in my previous job. She is a person every school would want, a person with a lot of energy, hardworking, a lot of enthusiasm, dedication. She loves children. She's that person who puts in that extra little bit, that extra little time after school.

Unfortunately, Minister, she has become terribly disheartened with the entire system. She looks at many things that face her today and she's actually losing her enthusiasm for teaching, citing such things as her classes being too large, a lack of support for students with special needs, a heavier workload and a frustration, a real frustration that she cannot provide the services to meet the needs of her students.

The Speaker: A question, the member for Kenora, please.

Mr Miclash: Minister, what do you have to say to a person like Barbara who, as I say, was one of the most dedicated people in the system but has lost that dedication today?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I notice that he says that a teacher he has talked to is disheartened with the system, and I can tell you I've spoken to a lot of teachers who would echo that comment. We have said all along that there's nothing wrong with the teachers in the province of Ontario, there's nothing wrong with the parents in the province of Ontario, there's nothing wrong with the students in the province of Ontario, but there are some problems with the system. So I would echo the comments of that teacher. In fact, I am disheartened with the system too. I'm disheartened when I hear comments about too large a class size when I know that we have more teachers in the province of Ontario versus students than any other province and yet we can't seem to manage to get that reflected in the classroom. I'm disheartened with that too.

I can assure the member opposite that we are doing everything we can to make sure that the quality of education in Ontario is not only protected but enhanced.

Mr Miclash: Minister, let's make it very clear. You have created this problem. You have created the problem that many teachers — maybe this is the crisis you were looking for. I'm going to send over Barbara's phone numbers, send you her phone numbers at work and home. She wants to talk to you directly. Would you have the courtesy to call Barbara up and find out what the problems are that she cites that you have created for her in the classroom today?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I can assure the member opposite that I have talked to and spoken with teachers right across this province. I think the member opposite knows that. I think he knows that I have been in virtually every area in this province and have been to the students. If we can arrange a telephone call with a teacher, I'm always, always pleased to make that kind of call.

WATER QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): My question is for the Minister of Environment. We recently learned that the consolidated hearings board has given approval for ICI Canada to dump 3.4 billion litres of waste water into the St Clair River, 3.4 billion litres of contaminated water, despite the objections of Walpole First Nation. The chief is quoted as saying, "We will not tolerate the destruction of our lands and the threat to the health of our people."

It's my understanding this water that is to be released contains phosphate, fluoride, ammonia and suspected and known carcinogens. Because I may only have time for one question, I'll ask you now —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): It doesn't work that way, member for Riverdale.

Ms Churley: I should know that.

Minister, can you explain to the House why your ministry argued before the board that 3.4 billion litres of contaminated waste water should be released into the St Clair River, and will you go to cabinet and have that decision overturned?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I am happy to respond to that. The fact of the matter is that there are various levels of contamination involved in all waste water. I understand there was a hearing process associated with this particular water, and considering the volume of the river to which this was being discharged, this technical committee recommended that discharge was okay.

I want to know from the member whether we should have advisory boards and hearing processes and technical people advising the minister and then have the minister reject that advice out of hand. I guess that's what the member would like the Minister of Environment to engage in.

I believe that I as a minister am responsible for setting the policy, for setting the discharge requirements and then allowing the technical community to have their say, but that if there is a hearing and there is a decision brought forward, I should support that decision in most cases.

Ms Churley: Minister, let me remind you first of all that it was you and your government who killed the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. You did that. I don't know what you said at the cabinet table, but the previous minister did that.

Minister, you have talked quite a bit, since you were appointed, a good line about protecting the environment, but the reality of your actions, and this proves it today, doesn't even come close to your words.

Think about the cumulative effects of these toxic products in the waste water. Think of the effect its going to have on that river and therefore the health of the people. I am going to ask you again to look into this case and go to cabinet and ask cabinet to overturn it. It is a bad decision for the environment. You have talked a good line since you were appointed to this position, and I ask you today to put your money where your mouth is and have this decision overturned.

Hon Mr Sterling: I will always pay respect to members of this Legislature and their concerns about the environment and will be glad to look at this file again. On my first blush of looking at this file, I was impressed by the process that had been gone through with regard to this matter. I was assured by this technical panel that in fact this discharge was well within the limits that have been set by previous governments for these kinds of discharge.

1720

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I have a statement with regard to weekly business next week.

Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House the week of October 7.

Monday, October 7, we hope to complete second reading of Bill 79, which is the Courts Improvement Act. On Tuesday, October 8, we will begin second reading of Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. On Wednesday, October 9, we hope to complete second reading of Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act. On Thursday, October 10, we will debate third reading of Bill 75, the Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act.

PETITIONS

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): Mr Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital;

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical

care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature.

SALE OF AMMUNITION

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your election.

I have another set of petitions from legal owners and users of firearms who are concerned about ammunition restrictions.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, which placed restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape;

"Whereas the records produced as a result of the provisions of Bill 181 cannot reasonably be used to track criminals and are in many locations across Ontario, where such records are kept, insecurely stored and thus available for criminal use as a shopping list for homes with firearms;

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters, recreational shooters, those who are most affected by the legislation;

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the illegal uses of ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal the Ammunition Regulation Act, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against those who criminally misuse firearms and ammunition."

I sign and support this petition.

DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your election.

This petition is about dangerous high-collision intersections.

"Whereas there are a number of dangerous high-collision intersections throughout Metropolitan Toronto and Ontario;

"Whereas a pilot project installing photo-radar-type cameras would help monitor these dangerous intersections and act as a deterrent;

"Whereas photo-radar camera monitoring systems have worked well in Australia and other jurisdictions improving safety;

"Whereas the provincial government is using a photo-radar-type camera on the new 401 tollway to collect tolls;

"Whereas the increase in traffic and the growing disregard for speed limits and traffic laws is the cause of

grave concern to pedestrians, cyclists and safe motorists alike;

"Whereas funding for extra policing is not available and very limited considering the great number of demands on the police;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the provincial Solicitor General support the installation of photo-radar-type cameras as pilot projects at Metropolitan Toronto's 10 most dangerous intersections and at various other dangerous intersections throughout the province."

I affix my name to this petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I have a petition signed by over 100 people, workers represented by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers in Ottawa, Woodstock, Guelph, Welland and Port Colborne, that reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I have a petition here signed by 71 residents of Scarborough Centre who live at 130 Bellamy Road North. It's a petition regarding co-op housing. It's in the correct format and I'm presenting it on their behalf.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the member for Yorkview.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): Mr Speaker, I was going to say congratulations on your election. I wish you had run — who knows? But you're looking very good.

On behalf of residents in my riding, I wish to submit a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I'm going to read it as follows:

"Whereas the government is intent on cutting educational funding so that children are denied their basic right to quality education; and

"Whereas the government cuts to day care facilities restricts parents' access to affordable and decent child care programs within the province; and

"Whereas the Harris government is intent on abolishing rent controls, and the rent-geared-to-income program, which provides decent housing for low- and middle-income tenants, consisting of 40% seniors, 42% families and 18% special needs and disabled tenants; and

"Whereas the government has introduced user fees on basic necessities such as prescriptions, medication for seniors, textbooks for school children and essential services like firefighting and policing; and

"Whereas the cuts to services will impact upon everything from public transit to borrowing library books; and

"Whereas the government has seen fit to abandon job training programs and failed to create a formal job strategy for the province despite continually high unemployment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly and the Mike Harris government to live up to their promises of protecting rent control, not introducing user fees, and creating over 725,000 jobs in the province."

I concur with the content of the petition and I will add my name to it.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario promised not to cut one penny from health care; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has proceeded to cut over one billion much-needed dollars from community hospitals; and

"Whereas the people of St Catharines have come to rely upon the caring professional service provided by health caregivers at the General Hospital, the Shaver Hospital and the Hotel Dieu Hospital, and who view this betrayal by the Mike Harris government as an attack on quality health care services in the Niagara region; and

"Whereas the residents of St Catharines do not accept the notion that any of its hospitals should be closed, because they are essential in order to maintain a caring and humane society;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government keep their election promise and restore health care spending to the level at which they promised during the last election campaign, so that all three St Catharines hospitals are able to continue to provide their much-needed valuable services."

I affix my signature to this petition and hand it to Trevor (Buzz) Nelson of Ferndale School in St Catharines.

1730

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government plans to sell off public services to corporations who will run them for profit; and

"Whereas after the corporate takeover it will be strictly user-pay for the services we now depend on; and

"Whereas our clean air and water standards and worker safety rules are being relaxed because corporations don't like rules that interfere with profits; and

"Whereas privatization is being sold as a way to save tax dollars even though large companies pay little or no taxes while individual Canadians pay most of the total tax bill; and

"Whereas Bill 7 was introduced in the interests of facilitating its privatization agenda by stripping public sector workers of their rights to retain fair working conditions when services are transferred or privatized;

"We, the following citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario to abandon the sell-off of Ontario's public services and reinstate successor rights for public service employees."

This is signed by a number of people from London, in my riding, and I am proud to affix my signature.

GARDE D'ENFANTS DAY CARE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) : J'ai une pétition qui s'adresse à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

«Attendu que des soins de garderie de haute qualité contribuent d'une manière significative au développement sain de tous les enfants ;

«Attendu que des recherches ont prouvé que les éducateurs d'enfants qui ont des bonnes conditions de travail fournissent des soins pour enfants de très haute qualité ;

"Whereas the best child care system, for all children, is one that is accessible, affordable and regulated for quality; and

"Whereas recent cuts to child care are destabilizing the entire child care system in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

«Que tous les financements publics pour les soins de garderie soient remis en place, incluant les contributions, les fonds capitaux et les subventions opérationnelles ;

"That all existing commitments regarding wage subsidies, pay equity, grants, and any other funding programs and/or policies that help to stabilize high-quality child care for children and families in the province of Ontario be retained;

«Que des audiences publiques soient tenues dans le cadre de la revue des services de garderie.»

J'y ajoute ma signature.

LOTTERY MACHINES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Speaker, you must have been a teacher. I think you have eyes in the back of your head.

I have a petition on lottery machines 6/49.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to regulate the distribution of lottery machines; and

"Whereas the lottery machines are distributed under the rules and regulations outlined under the Ontario Lottery Corp; and

"Whereas small independent operators are routinely discriminated against by the Ontario Lottery Corp because they lack the power and influence of large corporations;

"We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to consider revising the rules set out by the Ontario Lottery Corp to provide small independent operators with the opportunity to obtain lottery machines 6/49."

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital;

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature to it.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a further petition from the residents of my riding. They are extremely concerned with the possibility of rent controls being eliminated. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to remove rent controls from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever rent they want; and

"Whereas the government's proposed law will eliminate rent control on new buildings and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to keep the existing system of rent control."

I do concur with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is addressed to the government of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario appears to be moving towards the privatization of retail liquor and spirits sales in the province; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a safe, secure and controlled way of retailing alcoholic beverages; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides the best method of restricting the sale of liquor to minors in Ontario; and

"Whereas the LCBO has an excellent program of quality control of the products sold in its stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a wide selection of product to its customers in modern, convenient stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO has moved forward with the times, sensitive to the needs of its customers and its clients; and

"Whereas the LCBO is an important instrument for the promotion and sale of Ontario wine and thereby contributes immensely to the grape growing and wine producing industry;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its plan to turn over the sale of liquor and spirits to private liquor stores and retain the LCBO for this purpose."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in agreement with its contents.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES TRIBUNAUX

Mr Tilson, on behalf of Mr Harnick, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to improve Ontario's court system, to respond to concerns raised by charities and their volunteers and to improve various statutes relating to the administration of justice / *Projet de loi 79, Loi visant à améliorer le système judiciaire de l'Ontario, à répondre aux préoccupations exprimées par les oeuvres de bienfaisance et leurs bénévoles, et à améliorer diverses lois relatives à l'administration de la justice.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Does the parliamentary assistant have a statement?

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I would like to make a few comments with respect to second reading of this bill.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today to start off the opening debate on second reading of Bill 79, which I've indicated is called the Courts Improvement Act, 1996.

This bill has four purposes which I will list for you:

It amends the Courts of Justice Act to provide for the appointment of case management masters and makes consequential amendments to other acts.

It amends the Courts of Justice Act to change the names of Ontario courts.

It changes the regulation-making power in the Charities Accounting Act from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Attorney General on the recommendation of the public guardian and trustee. It also permits the making of

regulations which will relieve charities of the time and expense of obtaining court approval for non-controversial issues.

Finally, the fourth purpose of this bill is that it makes housekeeping and other minor amendments to the Courts of Justice Act and the Children's Law Reform Act.

The main purpose of this bill, as we know, is to set the stage for greater efficiency in Ontario's civil courts, indicating, as I have said, that it allows for the expansion of case management, which is a proven method of handling cases faster and at less cost.

1740

It renames the Ontario courts to make their status and function more recognizable to the public. This bill, as I've indicated, gives charities more flexibility in their affairs and increases their capacity to attract volunteers.

These and other legislative changes in Bill 79 are consistent with the government's goal of making Ontario's justice system more accessible and more effective. They support our government's effort to get rid of red tape that harms more than it helps. Most important, Bill 79 helps the government deliver better-managed and more effective civil justice services. A well-functioning civil justice system is important to businesses. They need to be sure that they can resolve their disputes with a minimum of time and cost. This is a prime consideration in their search for places in which to invest and create jobs.

Therefore Bill 79 fits into our government's plans to create an environment which will attract more jobs to this province. It fits into our goal to increase public confidence in the civil justice system by ensuring that it operates at maximum efficiency and better meets the needs of the public. With this bill we are taking the first big step towards lasting improvements in Ontario's civil courts.

The Attorney General would like to acknowledge up front that Bill 79 continues initiatives begun by both previous governments, going back to the Liberals in the late 1980s. Indeed, a key source for the bill's civil court amendments is the first report of the Civil Justice Review established by the NDP government in 1994.

This group of judges, the Ministry of the Attorney General officials and representatives from the bar and the public have thoroughly investigated the strengths and weaknesses of Ontario's civil justice system. Their recommendations have been both practical and visionary. Our government has openly acknowledged the great contribution of the Civil Justice Review and has supported its members in the implementation of their key recommendations.

I have listed the four purposes of the bill and I'd like to spend some time in elaborating on those four issues.

The first purpose of the bill is providing case management masters. The bill amends the Courts of Justice Act to set out rules for appointing, paying and supervising case management masters. To explain the role of these new officials I wish to give a brief description of case management.

Case management is where a team of judges reviews civil cases to find out early in the process what the essential issues are. The judges then take the steps that will most efficiently and effectively resolve the dispute.

We have tested case management in Ontario and find that it moves cases faster through the system, saving the courts and the parties in the case both time and money. Our findings agree with results in other jurisdictions.

Ontario's case management masters will be appointed by order in council for seven years, with three-year intervals. Their primary duties will be threefold: to hear motions, to preside at pre-trials and settlement conferences and to make sure that cases are proceeding according to the time lines set out by new case management rules.

To start with we expect to create these positions in areas of high civil caseload: Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor. Case management masters are a key initiative to the business plan for the Ministry of the Attorney General, our efforts to improve the administration of justice and to find innovative ways to deliver service. Furthermore the savings the courts will generate from greater use of case management will be used to pay for the new masters. Therefore the new positions will not create new costs for Ontario taxpayers.

The second purpose is to amend the Courts of Justice Act to change the names of Ontario courts. The General Division will now be known as the Superior Court of Justice. The Provincial Division will now be known as the Ontario Court of Justice. Both courts will be symbolically linked by an overarching court called the Trial Court of Ontario, what was formerly called the Ontario Court of Justice. These changes do not affect the structure of the courts in any way.

There has been some negative media coverage about the fact that we propose to change the names of the courts, but really, we believe there is no issue. Back in 1989, when the Liberal government pushed through court reform, the name Ontario Court (General Division) was clearly intended to be temporary. It was understood at that time that the name would eventually be dropped, as all trial courts and civil, family and criminal were merged and we would end up with one trial court, the Ontario Court of Justice.

That was the plan. However, two problems emerged. First, the Liberal government found out there could be no merging of the criminal and trial courts without extensive reform of the Criminal Code and the federal government at that time was not ready to go that far. The second problem was that in changing times the Liberals put Ontario out of step with the rest of the country. It's been a long-standing Canadian tradition to clearly differentiate the levels of court by their names. The name General Division conveyed no information to the public; not only that, it tended to devalue the status of the court itself.

The changes under Bill 79 make the designation of the courts clear and restore some of the recognition that this province's courts deserve.

In addition to changing the names of the courts, Bill 79 allows all judges in the province, whether provincially appointed or federally appointed, to be called justices. This was another part of the Liberals' court reform plan that was not enacted. Judges will now be called Mr or Madam Justice. The Chief Judge will be known as the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice. The associate chief judges will become Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice.

We think the changes in court and judicial designation under Bill 79 are timely. In essence, these are promises that have been made to the judiciary in the past but were never fulfilled. Fulfilling these promises is our government's way of acknowledging the great contribution Ontario's judges have made to the quality of justice in this province.

The third purpose I have indicated is changing the regulation-making power in the Charities Accounting Act from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Attorney General on the recommendation of the public guardian and trustee.

This particular issue we believe will be of great interest to service clubs and charitable groups and organizations that provide volunteer work in this great province, all over. It has caused great concern to the volunteers and directors of those organizations that provide work for those organizations. We believe Bill 79 will make it easier for charities to administer their affairs.

Right now a charity that wants to pay for directors' liability insurance must actually go to court for approval. They have to hire a lawyer; they have to fill out all the paperwork that's required to go to a judge to obtain that approval. All of that is timely. It's timely for the judicial process, it's costly to the charities and the organizations, and really, it's most inappropriate and causes great difficulties. In fact we expect there is a whole slew of directors from charitable groups around this province that simply aren't aware of it.

1750

The same process applies if the charity wants one of its beneficiaries to serve on the organization's board of directors. These are simple non-controversial matters that charities should not have to deal with by going to court. Doing so is a waste of time and resources for the charities themselves and for the courts. Not only that, it discourages people from giving their time to these organizations, and I think that is one of the most important issues of this initiative. We're trying to encourage people to volunteer their time and to cause them less cost from going through this whole process of having to go to court for approval for directors' liability, and other volunteers who provide assistance to these organizations.

This one issue is a prime example of overregulation of government rules that create great problems in this province and certainly do not address the modern business problems and demands faced by charitable organizations. They spend a great deal of time trying to raise money and doing the benefits for all kinds of worthwhile things in this province, and to be saddled with this obligation of having to go to court to get approval for directors' liability insurance is most inappropriate.

The Red Tape Review Commission has rightly concluded that these rules constitute more of a hindrance than a help. With Bill 79, we will remove the need for charities to get court approval to give certain benefits to volunteer directors. We will also modernize the rules for recordkeeping and the management of special funds. We will develop regulations to govern these activities.

After this bill becomes law, it will be clear that when a charity is ready to undertake any of these activities, it

can simply comply with the regulation instead of going to court for approval.

The public guardian and trustee will advise the government on new regulations that work best after consultation with the legal community and the charitable sector.

I can say that even in my own community, organization after organization has been asking for this, and it's a request that I think will be received well around the province.

There are a number of minor housekeeping amendments, which is the fourth and final purpose of the bill, which make amendments to the Courts of Justice Act and the Children's Law Reform Act.

The bill allows Ontario to abolish a \$3,000 judicial allowance given only to federal judges appointed before 1990 who have not elected supernumerary status. The Liberal government curtailed these payments, and the NDP went further but stopped short of eliminating them entirely. We now have in Ontario a bench where half of the judges of equal standing receive this payment and the other half don't.

The federal government has long disapproved of this practice, and with reason: It is out of line with what happens in most other provinces. Only one other province still makes this payment. The allowance was originally intended as compensation for some duties that were seen as extrajudicial. These duties are no longer viewed in the same way. Abolishing this allowance will save a significant amount of money, funds that could be used to support other improvements in the justice system. In addition, it will support the federal government's desire for country-wide uniformity in the salaries that they pay superior court judges.

Other minor amendments under Bill 79 include clarification of the appeal route from the new family court and correction of drafting and other language errors. Bill 79's housekeeping amendments allow special advisory committees for courts to meet as needed instead of quarterly. This gives the committee greater flexibility to deal with issues the court system faces as it goes through rapid change.

Those are the four main purposes of Bill 79. I believe the House will receive them well. I would indicate that the main thrust of the bill has to do with trying to make the justice system move faster, more efficiently and more

economically, and that the appointment of case management masters is a process that has been well received and, we believe, will solve many of the problems that now exist.

The first report of the Civil Justice Review, issued in March 1995, recommended that case management be introduced on a province-wide basis for all civil cases. The Civil Justice Review is composed, as I've indicated, of members of the judiciary, the ministry, lawyers and the public. The Civil Justice Review recommendations are similar to recommendations included in a report by Lord Woolf to the Lord Chancellor in England in August 1996. Lord Woolf at that time concluded, "Case management is a fundamental reform necessary to improve the efficiency of the civil justice system and lower cost to litigants."

The Civil Justice Review recommended that a new judicial office, called "judicial support officer," be created to support case management. The ministry has worked closely with the Chief Justice of Ontario (General Division) in creating this new office, which has been renamed "case management master." Case management masters require more active involvement of judges to manage cases through the various stages of litigation. Case management masters will assist judges in carrying out monitoring and the management of civil cases. The case management masters are term appointments. Their term can only be renewed by the Chief Justice of Ontario.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that without Bill 79 we cannot continue to implement case management, and without case management our civil courts will be continually plagued by backlogs and delays. All of the parties of this House, going back to the Liberal governments of the 1980s and the NDP government, have shown a commitment to case management. We owe it to the individuals and the companies that use the civil courts to ensure passage of this legislation. Many of their representatives have given of their time and ideas in the development of these amendments. We plan to continue consulting with these individuals and organizations, and with members in this House, on the implementation of these changes.

Mr Speaker, it being almost 6 of the clock, I would ask that we adjourn this debate.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock next Monday.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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First Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 7 October 1996

Lundi 7 octobre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 octobre 1996

*The House met at 1331.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): Three days ago the Health Services Restructuring Commission returned to Thunder Bay to swing its axe and render its final verdict on hospital closures in our region. The result? Shattered dreams, certainly for those of us who believed that a new acute care hospital was vital for our area to lead us into the future; anger at a commission clearly following orders from the health minister, whose main goal was to remove \$40 million annually from health care in our community regardless of the consequences; fear for those of us who know that our hospitals, already working at full capacity, must remove half of their acute care beds within three years; and further anxiety because of the commission's virtual dismissal of the long-term-care needs in our community.

Now we have learned that the health minister will not be gracing us with his presence today. Clearly he's avoiding us because of the fact that his restructuring commission's only job is to skip across the province and take \$1.3 billion out of our hospitals, all this motivated by the need to find \$5 billion for a tax cut nobody wants any more.

Nothing is more important to the people in Thunder Bay and our region than health care. The decision last week was flawed in many respects and will not look after the health care needs of our citizens. I promise you that we will fight this government for more than it has left us. All of us on all sides of the House cannot rest until this government's senseless destruction of our future is stopped.

I ask the Premier to answer one question I was asked this past weekend: When you finish this process, where will the sick people go?

EDUCATION FINANCING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): This government has shut the two and a quarter million people of Metro Toronto out of a critical decision-making process that involves the future of education for their children. Alarming, the Minister of Education's subpanel on education financing includes no one from Metro Toronto. This is the group that may well recommend raiding Metro's coffers to fund other school boards across the province. Why has Ann Vanstone, chair of the Metropoli-

tan Toronto School Board, not been included on this panel? Is it because she might say something the government doesn't want to hear?

Among the many who have concerns with this government's direction in education are the many active members of the parent-staff association of Frankland Community School in my riding of Riverdale. They're deeply concerned, as I am, not only about the lack of Metro representation, but also about the mandate and time line this government has given the subpanel to come up with recommendations on overhauling education finance.

The minister also released, on September 19, a discussion paper entitled Meeting Students' Needs. The deadline for the response is today. This paper speaks of massive changes to the way we fund our education, including funding for children with special needs. His lack of meaningful consultation with parents and leaders in the education field makes a mockery of our democratic system.

The minister muses about creating a crisis. Let me assure him he's on the right track here. He's creating more crises than he can shake a stick at and no amount of public relations jargon will be able to save him.

LISTOWEL TECHNOLOGY INC

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth): As the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism mentioned at the opening of this session, there has been more good news for the riding of Perth. I'd like to take this opportunity to share it with you.

On Monday, September 23, the town of Listowel and the province of Ontario were pleased to announce that Morioku Co Ltd of Japan will invest \$16 million in a 125,000-square-foot injection moulding plant that will employ 80 people. Construction of the new plant will begin in October of this year and is scheduled for completion in May 1997. It's projected that by the year 2001, the plant will employ 140 workers. The new plant will be called Listowel Technology Inc and will initially manufacture parts for Honda of Canada.

This is not the first good news announcement that I have made on behalf of the people of the county of Perth, and I do not see it as being the last. This government's policies and practices are showing the world that Ontario is once again becoming a prosperous place. For the people of Ontario, that means the government is doing what it promised: returning jobs, hope and opportunity to Ontario.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I rise today to share with the House, and more specifically the Minister of

Health, the results of a public opinion poll conducted in Sudbury by the Sudbury Star on health services restructuring in Sudbury.

The results of this survey are not surprising. An overwhelming majority of Sudburians are fearful of the government-controlled Health Services Restructuring Commission's ill-fated decision to remove two of our three acute care hospitals from our community.

I want to tell the Minister of Health that the survey found that an astonishing 83% of respondents believe the one-hospital plan will result in a deterioration of health care services. Only 5% believe that this new system will be an improvement. Reactions from those surveyed ranged from disbelief to sadness to anger, all aimed at the Big Blue Tory bulldozer that ransacked our entire community.

Here are just some of the comments of residents surveyed in our community: "Emergency services will deteriorate"; "Service will decline"; "The community will suffer"; "Too far too fast"; "We'd better not get sick."

Sudburians and I understand that the hospital system needed some adjusting. The local district health council recommended a two-hospital site. The Minister of Health agreed to support the DHC's recommendation and then, in an about-face, Tory-like move, reneged on his written commitment.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): Speaker, the joy about your election down in Niagara was overcome with shadow by a crisis that's looming there, a crisis that quite frankly has its origins right here in Mike Harris's Tory Queen's Park.

CUPE Local 1287 members have been on strike since September 3. These are the 650 regional workers down in Niagara who provide public services like water treatment and sewage treatment and day care and home care and social services and road maintenance.

The strike hasn't been about money. It's been about preserving valuable quality and affordable public services. I tell you, the taxpayers of regional Niagara are paying, because right now the cost is higher to keep these people out on their picket lines than it would have been had the region accepted their last offer. In fact, the support for this dispute and this work stoppage on the part of those CUPE workers is overwhelming: 97% rejection of the last regional Niagara offer.

Its origins are in Queen's Park because, rather than a made-in-Niagara solution that the workers in CUPE 1287 are eager to participate in, the administration at regional Niagara is insisting on imposing a made-at-Queen's Park, a Harris Tory resolution, which means more privatization, more job loss, lower quality and more paying for taxpayers. It's time to put an end to that.

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FOOT HEALTH WEEK

Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre): I'd like to inform my honourable colleagues in this chamber today about Ontario Foot Health Week which takes place this week, from October 7 to 12, 1996.

This annual event, aimed at educating the public and promoting better foot health, is sponsored by the Ontario Society of Chiropodists. This is an association of foot care professionals, many of whom are trained right here in Ontario, as opposed to podiatrists, who are trained in the United States.

Chiropodists provide consultative, orthotic and soft tissue surgical care to many thousands of Ontarians each year. They number over 200 all across the province and can be found in nearly every village and town, from Kenora to Prescott to Pelee. They are our neighbours and friends, yet it is a relatively unknown profession.

Chiropodists practise in hospital clinics, where they are partially funded by OHIP, and in private practice on a pay-as-you-go basis. The principal difference between chiropodists and podiatrists in Ontario, which is the only jurisdiction in North America to make the distinction, is that chiropodists may only perform minor surgical operations.

I know my honourable colleagues will join me in congratulating these foot care professionals on a job well done during Foot Health Week.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The Conservative government of Mike Harris has dealt a major blow to the amateur sports community in Ontario with yet another drastic cut in funding to all sports and the complete abandonment of 26 sports organizations.

It was apparent last week, when I asked the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation to disassociate herself from the comments of her parliamentary assistant, Tony Clement, MPP for Brampton South, who had said, "Amateur sports groups in Ontario are welfare recipients who have to be taken off the dole," that her so-called new strategy would amount to a virtual end to significant support for amateur sports groups in our province.

Yet another segment of our society has been sacrificed to finance a 30% income tax cut that will benefit the most wealthy to the greatest extent.

Thousands of youngsters who participate in healthy, constructive athletic activities previously supported by the recreation ministry, along with thousands of volunteers who willingly assist amateur athletes, have been abandoned by the Harris government. If the present trend continues under the unfair and unwise sports policy of the Conservative Harris government, only children of the rich and influential will be in a financial position to participate in athletic activities, with the implications for health and social wellbeing of the people of Ontario now obvious.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): "Homelessness" is a word we will be hearing a lot of in the coming months. This word is also synonymous with "hopelessness."

Last week the Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness held a press conference here at Queen's Park. It is estimated that there are between 25,000 to 50,000 homeless people living on the streets of Metropolitan

Toronto. This figure in my view, and it should be the view of many, is a shocking statistic.

In July this year a coroner's jury investigating the deaths of three homeless men recommended that an advisory committee be struck to identify successful models of affordable and supportive housing and develop a plan of action to ensure that the homeless, in particular those with substance abuse and mental illness, have access to appropriate housing and support services, and that funding should be provided by the appropriate government ministries to carry out this plan.

Sadly to date, these recommendations have not been acted upon. The days are getting colder, and I urge the Minister of Housing in particular, as well as many other ministers, to study those recommendations and deal with the problem now before more people die of hypothermia on the streets this fall and this winter.

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I rise in the House to recognize and honour National Family Week, which begins today and runs until October 13.

This year's National Family Week theme urges us to celebrate the strengths and importance of family and what they mean to each of us. The family unit is pivotal to a strong and developing community. This week we are encouraged to rediscover the many ways that families support and help their members. We should all be encouraged to stop and reflect on what families are all about. Families are about caring, families are about nurturing, and families are about supporting and developing the potentials of all of their members. Families are the backbone of our lives and of our communities.

Let me congratulate and honour all of my constituents who are celebrating National Family Week. I encourage all members to participate and celebrate the many strengths and benefits that families bring to our lives not only during this recognized week but every day of the year.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wanted to make a point of order under standing order 33(a). You'll be aware of course that standing order 33(a) falls under the rules of orders that are set out in the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly which require question period to be entered into at a particular time in the afternoon. The purpose of question period, as stated under section 33(a), is that "Questions on matters of urgent public importance may be addressed to ministers of the crown...." It seems quite evident that if questions on matters of urgent importance are to be addressed to ministers, the ministers have to be present for the questions to be placed to them.

With that in mind, I ask you in all seriousness about the sustained absence of the Minister of Health. Mr Speaker, I want you to be aware that on Wednesday last the Minister of Health was in the building and was present at health estimates, but did not —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. I understand. I heard your point of order, to the Leader of the Opposition, and I appreciate the concern that you bring to the place with respect to your point of order, but it is

not a point of order with respect to the ministers being in their place at the time. It's something that you may want to address through your House leaders' meetings, and address it there you should. But to ask the Speaker to rule as to the whereabouts of certain ministers and when and how they should be in this place you know is not a point of order. I appreciate that.

Mrs McLeod: With respect, I do believe that has a direct bearing on the carrying out of democratic responsibility of the Legislative Assembly. I would ask whether or not the Speaker has any role in determining whether an avoidable absence over consecutive days is in fact a deliberate violation of the standing orders of this House.

The Speaker: I appreciate that and it's not within the Speaker's purview. It's not within the standing orders and the orders that govern this House. Frankly, it's something the Speaker literally has no control over. I would ask again that if you would like to take this up with the government, you may do so through the appropriate channels, but clearly this is not an appropriate channel. I appreciate the input.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My first question was indeed for the minister responsible for closing hospitals, but since he doesn't feel it's important for him to be here —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. I would caution the member. We have ministers, they have responsibilities, and I know not of one who has that responsibility. I would ask you who you're going to put the question to and to name them properly, if you would. Thank you.

Mrs McLeod: It's difficult because we have a Minister of Health who doesn't feel that he's responsible for anything related to health care in this province. But in his absence, I will go to the minister whose responsibility is quite clear and whose fiscal agenda is really driving the destruction of health care in this province —

The Speaker: The question is to?

Mrs McLeod: — and that's the Minister of Finance.

Minister, having devastated health care in Sudbury, last Friday the Big Blue Tory bulldozer rammed its way back through Thunder Bay. They ignored all of the concerns that were expressed in our community over a period of months and they just simply bulldozed three of our five hospitals to the ground. The result and what they left us with was 50% fewer hospital beds, \$41 million slashed from health care in our region and literally hundreds of nurses and lab technicians and health care providers facing the elimination of their jobs. What they've done is taken all of the hope out of our community and left only discouragement and very real fear.

The people of Thunder Bay now know the cost of your tax cut in all-too-real terms. I ask you, do you really believe that your tax cut is worth destroying health care, not only in Thunder Bay and in Sudbury but in every community across this province?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The honourable Leader of the Opposition knows full well that there is absolutely no correlation between the tax cut and hospital closures. She also knows full well that the current hospital restructuring exercise was commenced by the previous government. I give them credit for that. They may not want to take it today, now that they're sitting on the other side of the House, but that is indeed where this process started. I say to the honourable Leader of the Opposition that she knows full well that the final recommendation as announced by the Health Services Restructuring Commission on Friday is very consistent with the Thunder Bay District Health Council hospital services review report. She knows that very well. She knows that full well. She knows they're consistent. The ultimate goal in this exercise is the care of the patient and delivering better patient care to people in the province of Ontario.

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Mrs McLeod: This is not some kind of abstract academic exercise; this is about the destruction of health care in my community. What I know full well is that this is not about patient care in my community. This is not even — you've been badly briefed and maybe the Minister of Health is equally badly briefed — about agreeing with the community direction. The community direction was ignored, as was the joint submission of our district health council and four of our five community hospitals. The Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital couldn't participate because it was forbidden to give its input by the ministry itself.

This has everything to do with the cuts that you and Mike Harris and Jim Wilson have made to hospital budgets, it has everything to do with starving community hospitals to the point where they have to close, and if they don't do it voluntarily, your minister's hatchet men come in and do it to them. We know full well that taking \$40 million out of health care in Thunder Bay and another \$40 million out of health care in Sudbury has nothing to do with improving quality or improving access to health care in our communities. It has only to do with your \$1.3-billion cut. If you are really concerned about quality and access to health care, you should repeal your \$1.3-billion cut. Will you do this? Will you take away the financial crisis that you have created for health care in this province and allow patient care, not your cuts, to determine the future of health care in Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member knows full well that the two previous governments eliminated some 8,600 beds from the health care system in the province of Ontario without doing the proper administrative thing and didn't close one single medium-sized hospital in the entire province, although they had no problems eliminating 8,600 beds, which would be the equivalent of 33 medium-sized hospitals in Ontario.

I say to the honourable member again that the hospital restructuring committee is independent. It is not part of the government.

Laughter.

Hon Mr Eves: You people can laugh if you want over there. Some important decisions have to be made about the future of health care, not only in Thunder Bay and

Sudbury, but in virtually every single community in this province.

I advise the honourable member to take the advice of the editorial page in her own Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal on October 5: "The bottom line for most people should be this: If we had a new hospital it would offer exactly the same services that the refurbished and enlarged general hospital will, but it would cost more than twice as much money. If the prospect of raising \$13 million locally and regionally seems daunting, try \$90 million for emphasis on the size."

Why don't you understand what the editorial board of your very own home-town newspaper has understood? It is time to restructure, do things more cost-effectively and provide better services to the patients of Ontario.

Mrs McLeod: If the Minister of Health had been here he might have been able to tell you in advance that what that editorial is recommending is something that might approach some kind of semi-decent facility being left in our community after you shut down three of our five hospitals. You would be aware that because your hospital commission is not independent in any way, shape or form, what that editorial suggests is needed as a minimum is much more than a fractional little bit of what your commission is leaving in Thunder Bay, either in terms of beds or of dollars to have a decent facility for people to get care in.

It is your cuts, and I come back to that, that are driving this. It is not some independent decision of a commission about what people in my community need. It is the fact that you have taken the dollars out of their budgets and the hospitals have to be shut down as a result of that. I can tell you what you must know full well, that not only are people scared in my community, but they are scared in communities right across the province.

In my own community, they are afraid they won't get health care and they're going to be put on planes and sent to Toronto. People in Toronto are scared because they know you're going to shut down health care in this city too. People in Kincardine, 3,000 of them, came out last week to say they are afraid of what you and Jim Wilson and Mike Harris are going to do when you get into Bruce county. There are 3,000 more people in Wiarton who are also frightened. They are pleading with you to stop your cuts and save their hospital services. Will you listen, will you stop the cuts and will you acknowledge that a second-rate health care system is too high a price to pay for your tax cut?

Hon Mr Eves: Does anybody really believe that the amount of our tax reduction on July 1 has absolutely anything to do with the hospital restructuring exercise?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: There are 35 chirping people on the other side of the floor. Talk about playing politics with an issue, talk about fearmongering for your own political benefit — I think you've hit rock bottom today. You know this government has pledged to reinvest savings we find in the health care system in the health care system. You know we pledged for well over a year that the health care budget would not go below \$17.4 billion, despite the fact that your pledge was \$17 billion, \$400 million lower,

I say directly to you, ma'am, who made that commitment of \$17 billion. Our health care budget this year will approach \$17.7 billion, some \$300 million more than we pledged and some \$700 million more than you thought was appropriate for health care in the province of Ontario. If you want to talk about who is cutting health care funding, pick up the phone, phone your honourable federal cousins and talk about reductions in transfer payments to this province and —

The Speaker: The question's been answered.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the minister's response to the Leader of the Opposition he used a term that I don't think is appropriate. We have to address members by their titles, not by gender basis. I would ask you to ask him to withdraw that.

Hon Mr Eves: I'll be happy to withdraw that. Please don't refer to me as "sir," especially coming from you.

The Speaker: I ask the Minister of Finance to withdraw the last comment. I don't think it's particularly helpful.

Hon Mr Eves: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

1400

NURSING STAFF

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): My second question is to the Minister of Finance. I'll say to the minister that I know and believe full well that your need to find the \$5 billion for your tax cut is what's driving you to take \$1.3 billion out of the budgets of our hospitals before you have any idea what the impact is going to be on the health care of people in the communities across this province. If you suggest that I am playing partisan politics by telling you how frightened the people in my community are that they are not going to get health care, I suggest that you have hit rock bottom and I dare you to come to my community and tell them they have no reason to be worried. Your commission didn't have the courage to do that publicly.

I want to raise a question of a second impact of taking \$1.3 billion out of the hospital budgets, another impact the Minister of Health has not been here to defend or to attempt to explain, because last week the Toronto Hospital fired 322 nurses. I suppose you're going to try to tell us that had nothing to do with your cuts to hospital budgets. The fact is that patients at that hospital are going to lose a half a million hours of nursing care and the hospital clearly says it is because you chopped \$32 million from its budget as part of that \$1.3-billion cut. I ask you to tell me, Minister, how will firing 322 nurses at Toronto Hospital and 15,000 nurses across Ontario improve health care quality, access for patients, waiting time for surgery being reduced or getting faster treatment in emergencies?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): The province of Ontario, as the member full knows, doesn't fire anybody in the nursing community. Various hospitals in every single community across Ontario have been asked to deal with smaller budgets and transfer payments from the province, just as we have been asked by the federal government to deal with

smaller transfer payments from them. We accept our responsibility and we deal with our responsibility, just as they are doing at the local level.

Mrs McLeod: The minister's friend Jim Wilson stands up in this House, when he's here, and says, "Don't worry about closing hospitals, because bricks and mortar don't cure people; it's people who cure people," and that is our point exactly, because nurses are on the front lines curing people. When you cut hospital budgets you leave hospitals with no choice, so they have to cut nursing staff. There are consequences because when you cut nursing staff, patients don't get care, nurses aren't there to give the morphine injection that patients need when they're in pain and they're not there to give the intravenous or antibiotics that patients need. You can't solve the problem of cutting nurses by taking a six-week crash training course and giving it to cafeteria workers.

Minister, we believe that nurses matter, so I ask you: Why are you and Mike Harris and Jim Wilson so determined to turn our hospitals into Third World institutions where families practically have to move into the hospitals to make sure their loved ones are going to get the care they need?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member knows full well that the ultimate objective of this is better patient care for everybody. Everybody would agree that the health care system has to be changed and restructured. Even the Ontario Nurses' Association understands that. They are having a town hall meeting on October 8, which is tomorrow, in North Bay, Ontario. I read to you from the notice about their own meeting. They understand that the health care system in Ontario has to be restructured and reformed because for too many years we've gone on the old base, the old system. For too many years we've invested our dollars in bricks and mortar as opposed to investing it in people who provide patient care and new technologies. That is what the restructuring exercise is all about.

I do understand that in the short term, and in terms of people having some concerns about what may be happening in their particular community, they have those concerns. But I would also suggest to the honourable member that she is doing nothing to assist the situation if she's out there fearmongering without approaching this in a constructive manner.

Mrs McLeod: My community approached it in a constructive manner. They made a joint submission. It was ignored by the commission. The nurses of Ontario are approaching this in a constructive manner. I've been at two of the town hall meetings, and they say loudly and clearly that you cannot start to provide plans for health care by slashing \$1.3 billion from hospital budgets, by shutting down hospitals, by carrying out behind-closed-door meetings and by slashing nursing staff in hospitals right across this province. They're telling you that you can't do it. People in Kincardine and Wiarton and Toronto and Sudbury and Thunder Bay are telling you that you can't do it. Hospitals are telling you they can't manage with your cuts.

All you're leaving them with in terms of some sort of local option is a choice between a guillotine and an electric chair. That's all you've left our communities

when it comes to providing health care. You are taking, with your \$1.3-billion cut, and it is a direct impact, 13 million nursing hours out of our hospitals. It is hard to believe. It's not just nursing care, it's also the technologists, the janitors, the cleaners and all the people who are an integral part of providing good health care.

Minister, stand up today and admit that your government's health restructuring is a sham, that it's in total shambles and at the end of the day all you'll have accomplished is having chopped your \$1.3 billion from our hospital budgets and hurt patients in the process.

Hon Mr Eves: I'll say to the honourable member very directly, at the end of the day we will stand by our commitment of \$17.4 billion to health care and in fact we will exceed that figure by substantial amounts. She knows that, I think.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): What about all those nurses?

Hon Mr Eves: Speaking of nurses, we all understand, I think, that nurses are a very important component of the health care system in the province of Ontario, that they provide front-line services to patients.

Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East): Why are you getting rid of them?

Hon Mr Eves: We aren't getting rid of any of them, I say to the honourable member. The hospitals are dealing individually with their situations as they see fit. The Ministry of Health has committed \$17.3 million for the first five years of the nurse practitioner education program. The Ministry of Health has committed \$170 million in long-term-care community services. That is going to create some 4,400 jobs in the long-term-care sector, and the member knows full well a great many of those jobs are going to be for registered nurses and registered nurse practitioners, RNAs.

The member knows full well that the ministry is providing \$1 million for the province-wide nursing project to create centres of excellence, to demonstrate effective improvement in patient-client outcomes through the use of best knowledge, skills and technology.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Mr Eves: So the Ministry of Health is making these reinvestments. At the end of the day there will be more money, not less, being spent in the health care system in the province of Ontario, but we will have a system that is better equipped to deal with patients' needs on a front-line basis.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I think you'd like to welcome a couple of delegations that are here today. The introduction of guests —

Interjection: Stop the clock.

The Speaker: The clock is stopped. You can tell because the numbers stop moving.

I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a South African delegation attending a parliamentary cooperation program hosted by the Legislative Assembly. They're up in the Speaker's gallery, if they'd like to rise.

On my left, if you would also please welcome the delegates attending the 12th biennial conference of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada. Welcome.

The Speaker: Third party questions? You can start the clock too.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): In the absence of the Minister of Health again today, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. I'll read from the headline of the Toronto Globe and Mail. It says the Mike Harris government has cut \$30 million for the Ontario treasury by confirming yesterday the closure of two of Thunder Bay's five hospitals. It's the Minister of Finance, I gather, who gets the \$30 million, not the people of Thunder Bay and the region, who lose out in terms of \$30 million in health care.

Let me ask the Minister of Finance this: The Minister of Health has already cut hospital budgets in the province by \$343 million this year. You took \$42 million out of Sudbury annually and you're taking, by our estimates, about \$38 million annually out of Thunder Bay. We think, if we start adding up the numbers, that this year you're going to take far in excess of \$343 million out of hospital budgets. If you add the closures to the budget cuts, you're going to take quite a lot in excess of \$343 million. Since you're taking all this money, \$343 million in across-the-board cuts and \$40 million at a whack annually out of towns and cities like Thunder Bay and Sudbury, what are you doing with the rest of the money, other than giving it away in a tax break to the wealthy?

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): First of all, I'm sure the honourable member appreciates the fact that any hospital restructuring that is done, be it in Thunder Bay, Sudbury or elsewhere, is not going to happen overnight. So those cost savings, if that's what you want to refer to them as, are not going to be found the next day at 9 o'clock after the story appears in the Globe and Mail the previous day. These things take time. There are not going to be patients displaced. People are going to do this in a thoughtful and organized and rational manner. That's the first statement I'd like to make.

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The second statement I would like to make to him, as I've said to the Leader of the Opposition, is that at the end of the day moneys are going to be reinvested in the health care system in the province of Ontario. This can't happen overnight either. Some of the moneys, quite frankly, are already being reinvested in the health care system before any restructuring even starts to take place. That will be a continuous, ongoing process over the next few months and years.

Mr Hampton: I note that the Minister of Finance did not disagree with my assessment. The fact is that the government is taking far more out of hospitals than it has so far admitted; it admits to taking \$343 million. But simply add up the numbers out of Sudbury and Thunder Bay and it's very clear that the government is taking far more money.

If this is what the Minister of Finance refers to as reinvestment, let me tell you what the commission said in Thunder Bay. "The health services review commission has requested that the Minister of Health ask the Thunder Bay District Health Council to lead a process for developing a plan to build an integrated system of delivery of health care services, including the feasibility of moving towards the establishment of an integrated governance structure for health services."

This is all that is being offered to the people of Thunder Bay: You are going to be requested to ask for a process that hopefully leads to a plan. Is this the Conservative government's definition of reinvestment in the health care system for Thunder Bay, that you have to request someone to ask to lead a plan that might lead somewhere? Is that your definition of reinvestment?

Hon Mr Eves: To the leader of the third party, do you not want us to consult the local community when we're taking these decisions? I've gone through saying to the leader of the third party that we are doing these things in a thoughtful, rational, organized process; they're not going to be accomplished overnight, nor are hospitals going to be closed overnight, nor are hospitals going to be merged or their services rationalized overnight. This is a long and ongoing process that is merely starting now.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): Starvation is a slow process, but it's happening faster.

Hon Mr Eves: Despite the interjections of the Leader of the Opposition, she had her opportunity to ask two questions; she'll have an opportunity to ask some more if she wants in a few minutes. However, I say to the leader of the third party that these things are long overdue. We've talked about the 8,600 beds that have come out of the system under the two previous administrations, that your ministers of health extracted from the system. I'm not necessarily critical of the fact that those beds were reduced, except that they didn't do the other component of that, and that is to reduce the administrative side of the equation at the same time so that at the end of the day we can invest our health care dollars that we have committed to spend, and then some, in a more patient-delivery-mode system of health care in the province of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Finance tries to give soothing words, but the fact of the matter is that health care services are going to be lost in communities like Thunder Bay and like Sudbury when those hospitals are closed, and this government has no upfront alternative services either in place now or planned for those communities.

I can tell the Minister of Health what people think in those communities. They believe that they aren't going to see a full portfolio of alternative community services like home care, like community care, like health education and like the kind of disease prevention strategies you need. What they're seeing is that you walked into Sudbury and you announced cuts of \$42 million a year to health care and you've got no alternative to present to Sudbury; you walked into Thunder Bay and you're taking \$38 million a year out of health care and you've got nothing concrete to offer the people of Thunder Bay in terms of alternative services. They know that what you're

really doing is you're taking money out of health care and you're transferring it into a tax break for the wealthiest people in this province.

Let me ask you here, what are the alternative services for Thunder Bay? What are the alternative services for Sudbury? What are they, where are they and when are we going to see them?

Hon Mr Eves: Those are going to be developed over a period of time, as I've explained to the honourable member, nor are the hospitals closing tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. Maybe that's what you envision will happen, but that is not the way the process is going to work. You know very well that the Minister of Health has already invested substantial moneys in northern Ontario and elsewhere in the province of Ontario — \$170 million that I talked about earlier in question period about long-term care reinvestment, employing 4,400 more people. Do you not want those 4,400 more people employed, I say to the leader of the third party?

Mr Hampton: That's actually a cut, Ernie, with what's supposed to be spent. That is a cut, Ernie; do you understand that? That's not an alternative, that's a cut.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Leader of the third party, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Eves: Expanded kidney dialysis services province-wide: \$25 million. Cardiac surgery reinvestment: \$15.5 million. Cardiac stents in a lot of cardiovascular units, including Sudbury — are you opposed to that? Restored out-of-province coverage. Expanded diabetes care: \$5.8 million. A \$70-an-hour sessional fee to northern and rural Ontario that your government wouldn't commit to, our government did: \$13 million. Community-sponsored contracts, 21 northern communities —

The Speaker: Answer, please, Minister of Finance.

Hon Mr Eves: — \$6.7 million. Do you not want that to go into northern Ontario? Expansion of psychiatric care services in Timmins: \$194,000. What have you got against Timmins? Do you not want that money reinvested? I can go on and on and on. The member knows that we are reinvesting money in the health care system —

The Speaker: Minister of Finance, order. The question's been answered. Leader of the third party, second question.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, you're very good with numbers. If you add up everything that the Minister of Finance has mentioned, it still comes to less than what is being taken out of the health care system and much less than what is being taken out of Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

The Speaker: The question, third party? Who's your question to?

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My second question is to the Minister of Labour, who has now taken over the task of gutting the Workers' Compensation Board. The minister wasn't here on Thursday when we asked about a leaked cabinet submission proposing a sweeping attack on injured workers, but fortunately today we've got another leaked document. This is the mother of

all documents in terms of the destruction of the Workers' Compensation Board, about 58 pages detailing all of the cuts that are going to happen at the Workers' Compensation Board.

The document includes a communication strategy which anticipates the following worst-case newspaper headlines on the government's proposal. The first one is, "WCB Overhaul Attack on Workers." The second one is —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Leader of the third party, order. You know full well that signs are not allowed in this place. It's your time and as long as you hold them up I can't allow question period to continue. You can either choose to hold them up and I'll stand here as long as it takes, or you can put them away and we'll continue.

Mr Hampton: Well, Speaker, I seem to remember someone holding up "Call Police" signs in this House all the time, but I guess that was then and this is now.

My point is simply this: When you read this cabinet document, it becomes very, very clear that the government's agenda is to take literally billions of dollars from injured workers and to redistribute that money to employers, to some of the bad bosses we've been hearing about.

The Speaker: Is there a question?

Mr Hampton: There is a question.

The Speaker: May we get to it, please.

Mr Hampton: Since you got headlines over the weekend such as, "Proposed Changes to WCB Assailed" and "WCB to Hurt Workers," my question to the minister is, when you're giving \$6 billion to employers and taking \$15 billion from injured workers, don't you understand that no amount of communications planning, no amount of spin-doctoring will distract people from understanding the real Conservative agenda, to take from working people and to give to those who are already wealthy? Don't you understand that?

1420

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): I just want to assure you that there has been recognition in this province now for several years that the WCB is in need of an extensive overhaul. It is not appropriately focused, as you well know. In fact, your Minister of Labour, Bob Mackenzie, said the following: "There is a growing feeling that the WCB is becoming a drain on Ontario's economy, on our ability to attract investment and jobs and spark business confidence. Never has there been such unanimous agreement that the board is in critical need of reform and renewal." This was Bob Mackenzie at committee hearings on Bill 165, and how we agree: There is a need for reform. There is a need to ensure that injured workers will always have the appropriate protection. However, we are changing the focus at the WCB. Our focus is going to be to develop a coordinated strategy that will focus attention on prevention in order that we won't have the disability and won't be required to provide the compensation and will avoid the human cost of the injury.

Mr Hampton: I guess I have to remind the Minister of Labour that the Workers' Compensation Board had a surplus and has a surplus. In fact, the Workers' Com-

pensation Board liability over the longer term has actually been dropping. So an attempt to cook up another phony crisis isn't going to work here. The Workers' Compensation Board is actually in a better financial position now than it was three years ago, so don't try to cook up some phony crisis.

I want to go directly, though, to this prevention business that the minister is talking about, because if you turn to page 11 of the cabinet submission you find that what the government intends to do is take away \$1.4 billion from older injured workers; that is, people who are older. They're not back in the workplace; they're retired. That's got nothing to do with prevention. That's taking money, \$1.4 billion, from somebody who's been seriously injured and is living on a limited income. It's got absolutely nothing to do with prevention. It's called taking money from those who are not well off, it's called taking money from those who are living on a fixed income and it's called transferring it to your wealthy friends. So don't try to mix in any prevention when it comes to page 11.

Let me ask you this: How are you going to explain to older injured workers that you want to take \$1.4 billion from their pensions and make that part of the \$6 billion you're going to give to your wealthy bad bosses? How do you explain that? How do you justify taking \$1.4 billion from older injured workers so that you can give \$6 billion to employers?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm extremely surprised that you are not concerned for the future security of benefits for the injured workers whether they be older or younger. I would indicate to you that it is that massive unfunded liability we have today, which presently stands at \$10.9 billion, that is seriously jeopardizing the ability of the WCB to pay out benefits to injured workers.

Did you realize, despite what you're saying today, that between the years 1991 and 1995 over \$1.65 billion was transferred from the investment portfolio to cover the yearly benefit costs? So there is less and less money available to cover the costs for the future. This is the problem we are trying to address. We are trying to make sure there are benefits available in the future, but at the same time we want to change the focus to prevention. We want to make sure that the workplaces are as safe and healthy as they possibly can be. I would encourage you and the members of your party to work with us in that endeavour.

Mr Hampton: Let me go right back to the minister. Why is the minister taking \$1.5 billion from injured workers and billions of dollars from elsewhere in the system, and why is the minister giving \$6 billion away to employers?

While I'm at it, your document reveals that you plan to change the name of the Workers' Compensation Board. The document reveals that changing the name is going to cost \$1 million. If you're so interested in the financial health of the board, why spend \$1 million merely for a name change? Why give \$6 billion away to employers? It would seem to me that the smart thing to do would be to care for those financial resources, to make sure they stay in the system and, above all, not to waste \$1 million on a name change. Why give away all

this money if you're worried about the financial health of the board?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would just remind the leader opposite that it was your own Minister of Labour, Mr Mackenzie, who recognized that there was a need to overhaul the WCB, it was your government that embarked on the program of de-indexation of pensions and it was your government that first started to reduce the level of benefits. Obviously, if we're going to continue to have a viable system, we are going to have to ensure that we make the changes that are going to ensure that benefits are available for the future.

GO TRANSIT

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): A question for the Minister of Transportation: Earlier this year you falsely accused GO Transit of running 2,000-seat trains with only 20 passengers. Do you remember that? Then last week you stood up in the House and praised GO Transit for the Casino Rama express train, yet the next day you scrapped that train to Casino Rama. Most recent is your announcement that GO Transit will be privatized, yet the Minister of Finance is saying that is not the case. What is going on? Do you know what is going on in your ministry? Have you got your signals crossed again?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): Sometimes I wonder if the honourable member really knows what he asks. This government has said all along that we want to do better for less. We've been saying it. We've also been saying that we feel public transit is a major entity in moving people around. I'm also on record saying many times that I'm a big supporter of GO. As a matter of fact, I would like to see GO expanded even further to deliver better services. All we want to do is deliver better services for the people in the GTA, and we're committed to doing that. Nothing has changed, and we are going to do better for less, as we've been saying all along.

Mr Colle: The general manager of GO Transit, Rick Ducharme, is saying that you don't know what you're talking about, since many of those operations are already contracted out, from train maintenance to operations. Even the trains themselves, if you don't know, have been sold off to some offshore holding company in Germany. Isn't this just a smokescreen? It's got little to do with privatization, but rather, this is about more cutbacks to GO service and this is about provincial offloading of the running costs of GO on to the backs of local property taxpayers in cities like Oshawa, Whitby, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Milton, Georgetown, Mississauga, Bradford, Barrie, Stouffville and Markham. Isn't this what this is all about? It's not about privatization; it's about you making property taxpayers pay for your responsibility, which is running the GO system.

Hon Mr Palladini: I don't know whether there was a question in that, but the province has no intention of getting rid of GO. In fact, I'm hoping we can expand and increase ridership with GO.

Commercialization is just one option, and we are going to take a look at other options as well. I can assure the honourable member and the people in the GTA that we are not going to get out of the GO business.

1430

FRANCHISE BUSINESSES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. In the gallery today there are dozens of Loeb franchisees who have travelled a long way and brought literally thousands of petitions calling for this government to introduce franchise legislation. I introduced a private member's bill over a year ago that went nowhere. Since then 45 franchisees have lost their stores. The 22 here today stand to lose theirs on November 2.

Your government received the report of the franchise working group over a year ago and you've done absolutely nothing. My colleague and I are afraid for the future of small business in this province. Dreams are being destroyed. Your own parliamentary assistant said in the debate on my bill, "There is a need to address the problems associated with the franchise sector."

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): Yes, but he voted against the bill.

Mr Martin: Yes. But still the government has done nothing.

Will you commit today to franchise legislation before November 2? On this day, when we celebrate the week of the family, will you bring in legislation that will protect these families before they lose their ability to make a living?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I am aware that there are some problems right now between franchisees and franchisers. I believe it is important for franchisers and franchisees to work together to resolve this because it's a very important working sector in the province.

I know that franchisees are looking right now to get a more even playing field, a level playing field in terms of their businesses. I'm quite aware of this fact and I've asked my staff to restart their efforts to get moving on the franchise legislation. I think it's very important.

A number of things have come out from franchisees, as my colleague Mr Martin knows. Certainly part of what they're asking for is some sort of alternative dispute mechanism to resolve cases before going to court. This is very important, I believe. We're looking at disclosure requirements to make sure, before franchisees enter into these agreements, they have some awareness of the business commitments they will be entering into. There are a number of issues that franchisees have brought up, and yes, this government is interested in looking after their interests.

Mr Kormos: The minister is, among other things, minister of consumer protection. We've got victims sitting right here in the Legislature who have come to this chamber for help. They're under attack by Loeb and its parent company Provigo, one of Canada's most profitable companies that has abandoned good faith in its franchise agreements and has forced these people, who could ill afford the cost and time of litigation, to litigate.

Time is of the essence, Minister. They can't wait for you to draft your legislation and let it stand in order before it gets passed through this House. They need your help now. They're on the verge of losing their businesses,

their life savings and their families' futures. You've got to deal with them today.

It's your job as minister of consumer protection. Tell us when you're going to introduce legislation providing a regulatory scheme to protect these franchisees and please tell us that you will use your office to mediate in this dispute between them and Loeb/Provigo. These are victims, and if you aren't helping them you're against them, and by God, if you're against them you're destroying families and small business in this province.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The member across the way will know that I'm meeting today with a delegation of Loeb franchisees. In fact, prior to that meeting my colleague Mr Lalonde has asked me to meet with a number of other members who were not part of that delegation, and I'm accommodating that request as well to meet with these stakeholders.

I'm quite surprised that the member is accusing us of dragging our heels. I might refer him to the Hansard back on October 13, 1993, when the then Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Marilyn Churley, was indicating that if, when the Liberals were in power — and insert "NDP" in there if you like — they had moved ahead with legislation, possibly the problem we're looking at now wouldn't be happening. The issue is that even if we passed legislation today, it wouldn't resolve the specific problems.

Mr Kormos: These people are here today. They need your help now. Will you help them?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Welland-Thorold, you're out of order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The minister then went on to say that she will be making a commitment to making sure the process is kept in place and there is a resolution of the problem.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): What are you going to do? You are the government.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I must say I'm quite surprised at the member across the way as well, because if they had such a commitment, perhaps when their colleague Mr Jim Wiseman in 1994 — after that kind speech by the then minister, he provided a private member's bill to actually address this, which was not supported by their party.

So we will be moving ahead. We will be meeting with the stakeholders.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines. As we enter another hunting season in Ontario, it has come to my attention —

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I have a copy of that question.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. The member for Cochrane-South, would you please come to order.

Mr Stewart: Do I get to start over again, Mr Speaker, so that everybody will know what I'm asking?

The Speaker: It might make it a little easier if you start where you left off.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, sir. As we enter another hunting season in Ontario, it has come to my attention that a new fish and wildlife board is advising the minister on fish and wildlife issues. Conservation and wildlife preservation is very important to a number of my constituents. We must ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the fish and wildlife in this province.

Could the minister please update my constituents on the status of the board's first meeting and what has been accomplished to ensure that conservation of fish and wildlife remains a priority?

Interjections.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines): I had a little difficulty hearing the question and there's a bit of disturbance here, but I'll answer the best I can the gist of it.

The member is absolutely correct that this government is following through on its commitment to dedicate all licence fees, fines and royalties to a special account for hunting and fishing opportunities for Ontarians. Consistent with that promise was a commitment we would create an advisory board of those who pay the user fee, if you like, for fishing licences or hunting licences.

The inaugural meeting was an orientation session. It was held on September 7. The board consists of 11 members from different parts of Ontario and it's led by a biologist and lodge owner, Mr Phil Morlock. The board will give advice to the minister. The advice, along with an account of where the money is spent, will be tabled in this Legislature on a yearly basis.

Mr Stewart: The Peterson government at one time stated that all revenues collected for hunting and fishing fees would go back into the resource, but unfortunately — surprise — it never happened. Our government made a serious commitment to ensure that the money collected from fees and licences would be put back into preservation of fish and wildlife. I believe that approach is welcomed by many.

Minister, can you please advise the House what action has been taken on the issue of allocating revenues obtained through fees and licences, and will they be put back into fish and wildlife conservation?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I thank the member for the question. I'd like to remind the House that Bill 26 fulfilled our commitment to dedicate all the revenue from fishing licences and hunting licences. As this House will know, back in the late 1980s, when they brought in the residential fishing licence, we were promised that money would go into a special account, not thrown into the consolidated revenue fund and spent other than in areas that would enhance fish and wildlife management in this province.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Where's the other \$20 million?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The NDP minister, Mr Wildman, is interjecting here. He said it couldn't be done. I'm here to tell you that we followed through on a campaign commitment that we made in the spring of 1994. It's another promise that's been kept by this government.

1440

AMATEUR SPORT SPORT AMATEUR

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the Honourable Marilyn Mushinski. Minister, last Friday I attended your press conference at York University where you announced your government's so-called strategy for provincial sports organization funding.

Pas une personne parmi tous les représentants d'organisations sportives que j'ai rencontrés affirme être en accord avec la façon de faire du gouvernement et la façon de laquelle ce dossier est traitée.

I did not meet one single person who was actually consulted on this. I met some people who received a letter saying they would be consulted but were never consulted.

So my question is this: Before cutting funds to 26 of the 81 provincial sports organizations, how many of them were actually consulted, and can you tell us the names of these organizations?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Mr Speaker, let me start off by congratulating you on your appointment as Speaker of the House.

To the honourable member, as I suggested last week, we have had an 11-month consultation process with provincial sports organizations. I will be happy to provide the list since it is too long to read it today.

Mr Lalonde: The minister just said through 11 months of consultation. As I said in my previous question, no one has been consulted on this issue, no one. What you have announced on Friday, Madam Minister, is the reduction of the amateur sports budget from \$11.8 million to \$8.1 million for 1996-97, which in turn means that at least 26 sports organizations will no longer qualify to receive government funding.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

M. Lalonde : C'est ça, votre stratégie. C'est clair que cette stratégie est de réduire le financement et non de promouvoir le sport amateur en Ontario.

How can this government hold a straight face and say that it is committed to amateur sport, that it wants to develop coaches, athletes and volunteers and increase participation among children and youth with such a strategy?

With the introduction of your so-called strategy, this government implies that sports organizations have spent Ontario taxpayers' money unwisely, that they are welfare cases and a burden for our society. Besides reducing the amount of money dedicated to amateur sports and changing the way the money is distributed, what did this government do to improve sports organizations in Ontario?

Hon Ms Mushinski: Let's be absolutely clear. As I said last week and as I have said on a number of occasions, a sports system without a strategy is no system at all. Clearly the new strategy that I announced last week was intended to spend taxpayers' dollars a little more wisely.

Let me tell you what has happened in the last 20 years of a system that was supported by the previous government and the government before that. It grew from 55 provincial sports organizations to 81, and let me read to you what some of those funds went towards.

Why, for example, were we funding 10-pin bowling? Do you think taxpayers want to spend money on bureaucrats subsidizing 10-pin bowling? Why were we paying administrative dollars for horseshoes? Why were we paying administrative dollars for baton twirling? Why were we paying for equity in synchronized swimming, since I haven't yet seen one male synchronized swimmer?

GO TRANSIT

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I would image, Speaker, there are many interested parties in the response they just got from the minister.

My question is to the Minister of Transportation, the minister who is quoted as always saying he can do more for less. On the weekend there were a number of reports in the paper where you and others were commenting on possible future plans that you have for GO Transit. You talked about everything from privatization of GO Transit to cutting subsidies to GO Transit. You even went so far as to suggest that you were prepared to offload, download on to the municipalities of the province of Ontario that are serviced by GO 25% of the operating cost.

I want to remind you that in the last election you ran on a document called The Common Sense Revolution. In that Common Sense Revolution you said two things. Number one, you said there was only one taxpayer. Clearly, offloading 25% of the cost of GO Transit on to municipalities is going to mean either there's going to be a cut in service or — guess what? — there's going to be an increase in taxes in those municipalities. You failed on that promise.

The second thing you said was that you'd work closely with municipalities. I've taken the time to speak to a number of people within the transportation industry. Nobody's been talked to about passing 25% of the cost on to municipalities. What do you attempt to gain by passing 25% of the cost of GO Transit on to municipalities, other than increasing municipal taxes?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I want to reiterate again that we are taking a look at everything this government does to see how much involvement there should be with government in the delivering of services. GO is just one of them. We want to maximize the dollars that we put into GO — this is what I've been saying all along — and work with the municipalities to see how we can get a better return on the dollars we put in.

As far as the honourable member's question about the municipalities is concerned, it's clear that the municipalities benefit from GO Transit, so there are some things that maybe we've got to talk to them about. The 25% participation could be one of them. Again, I want to emphasize that these are just thoughts.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): A supplementary to the minister: You've clearly said, today if not on the weekend, that you intend to proceed with your 24%

downloading on to property taxpayers in the GTA. But what is really puzzling is that I don't understand where the common sense is in asking those same property taxpayers not to fund a system that they're going to benefit from, but to fund in effect your privatization of the system, so that 25% is going to go not into paying for service, but into paying for the profits that your wealthy friends are going to make through the privatization of GO Transit. Where is the common sense in that?

Hon Mr Palladini: Every day over 100,000 people are going to take the GO train. That's not going to change. If anything, we have intentions to see how we can increase ridership.

As for the honourable member's assumption that we are going to sell off our GO assets, again, that is not the intent of this government. We have the intention to see how we can better deliver the services and be more efficient in delivering those services. The possibility of commercializing it could increase services and make it cheaper for Ontario taxpayers, for the taxpayers in the GTA, to take benefit from that. I want to say commercialization is only one option we are considering. However, we are going to be willing to take a look at other possibilities.

1450

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West): My question is to the minister without portfolio with responsibility for privatization. Over the last several months we have seen the unions at the LCBO and TVO run extensive advertising campaigns in support of maintaining these organizations in their present state. We can all appreciate the fact that there may be some apprehension among the employees of both these agencies with respect to their future, given the government's commitment to looking at both the LCBO and TVO as possible privatization candidates. Would the minister indicate to us when the employees of the LCBO and TVO and other government agencies might have a better idea of the government's plans and, thus, their individual futures?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): Mr Speaker, I want to start off by congratulating you on your victory. Given the flavour of the discussion and the debate in this House, I know you will do a great job.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): That's not what you said down at this end

Hon Mr Sampson: Oh, yes it is.

I want to thank the member for the question. I understand the concerns of the people in Ontario, the workers of the public service, the workers of the various agencies and boards and commissions of this province as we as a government review the way in which we are currently doing business in this province, but I think it's important for those people to understand that while change is certainly difficult to initiate sometimes, it's important for us as a government to continue to deliver on our plan to try to do better for less, to try to take a look at what government is doing and see if there are better ways to do it, see if there are more efficient ways to do it, see if

there are more economical ways to do it. That is something we are doing, and we'll be coming forward shortly with a plan that will allow this government —

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for St Catharines, come to order.

Hon Mr Sampson: — to exercise that plan to deliver on our commitment to try to make sure that this government is doing what it's supposed to be doing efficiently and effectively and fairly.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise on a point of order related to your ruling earlier. I didn't want to interrupt question period, and I know you would agree that it would be better to raise it now.

I want to draw to your attention Hansard of October 23, 1991, when a member then from Durham rose in the House on a point of order with the then Speaker. He said he noticed that the member for Etobicoke West was displaying a sign that said, "Call the police." He raised objections to this, saying he believed it was out of order. The Speaker then ruled. The Speaker said:

"To the member for Durham East, the question about signs in the chamber has been raised on occasion both during this Parliament and previous parliaments. There is no standing order with respect to signs in the chamber." Then further, "If a rule change is sought, members will have to approach the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly with their request to have something put in the standing orders, but without anything specifically in the standing orders, it makes it very awkward for the Speaker to make" a ruling with regard to the display of signs in the Legislature.

Mr Speaker, I know you would want to deal with this. Perhaps, then, you would consider whether this matter should indeed be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee, because obviously, according to the Speaker in 1991, it was not out of order to display signs by the member for Etobicoke West.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): That was quick work, as a matter of fact, member for Algoma. What I will do is take that under advisement. I think that's probably a wise decision at this time.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): I move that Mr Pouliot and Mr Kormos exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business; and that the House will commence at 11 am on Thursday, October 10, to discuss ballot item number 40 only.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Any debate? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I recognize the member for — it'll be easy, because it's the one I can remember — Scarborough North.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me commend you for the excellent job you're doing so far.

A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government plans to sell public housing;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not to privatize public housing and to allow for public hearings."

I affix my signature along with those of the many people who are extremely concerned about this thing.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Mr Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of workers from your own community of Etobicoke, Mississauga and Toronto, all members of the United Steelworkers of America. It reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I agree with this petition and am affixing my signature to it as well.

ABORTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): I am pleased to present a petition that has some 500 signatures from my riding of Durham East.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness;

"Whereas abortion is not therapeutic;

"Whereas abortion is never medically necessary;

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require 'elective procedures' to be funded;

"Whereas there is no right to publicly funded abortion;

"Whereas it is the responsibility and the authority of the provinces exclusively to determine what services will be insured;

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is hazardous to women's health;

"Whereas the availability of abortion at public expense leads to the use of abortion as a means of birth control;

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded 45,014 abortions in 1993, at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario provincial government remove abortion as a service or procedure covered under the provincial health insurance plan."

I affix my name.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two acute care hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendation to close two acute care Sudbury hospitals and return to the DHC model of a two-site hospital system."

HEALTH CARE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I have a petition from Cobourg. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Leave our health care system alone. No cuts; no caps to our doctors' wages."

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North

York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

BEAR HUNTING

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

This is signed by hundreds of people from all over the province of Ontario, and I'm happy to affix my signature.

1500

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I have a petition from my constituency of Nepean which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas drinking and driving is the largest criminal cause of death and injury in Canada;

"Whereas every 45 minutes in Ontario a driver is involved in an alcohol-related crash;

"Whereas most alcohol-related accidents are caused by repeat offenders;

"Whereas lengthy licence suspensions for impaired driving have been shown to greatly reduce repeat offences;

"Whereas the victims of impaired drivers often pay with their lives while only 22% of convicted impaired drivers go to jail and even then only for an average of 21 days;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We urge the provincial government to pass legislation that will strengthen measures against impaired drivers in Ontario."

I'm pleased to affix my own signature thereto.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the current rate of unemployment in the construction industry in the Ottawa-Carleton area is at a record level of 48%;

"Whereas Ontario-based construction workers and contractors encounter a great many regulations that effectively prohibit them from working in Quebec while construction workers and contractors based in Quebec encounter no such restrictions in Ontario;

"Whereas negotiations over the last number of years between various governments from Ontario and Quebec that were dedicated to eliminating barriers to labour mobility have failed to level the playing field for Ontario and Quebec workers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the proposed Construction Workforce from Quebec Act tabled by Jean-Marc Lalonde, MPP for Prescott and Russell, on June 4, 1996, to protect Ontario workers and contractors in the construction industry be adopted."

I sign my signature to the petition.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a further petition signed by residents of my area concerning the intended removal of rent control. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intention to remove rent control from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever they want for rent; and

"Whereas the government's proposed law will eliminate rent control on new buildings, and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing system of rent control."

I concur with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the government of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario appears to be moving towards the privatization of retail liquor and spirits sales in the province; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a safe, secure and controlled way of retailing alcoholic beverages; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides the best method of restricting the sale of liquor to minors in Ontario; and

"Whereas the LCBO has an excellent program of quality control of the products sold in its stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a wide selection of product to its customers in modern, convenient stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO has moved forward with the times, sensitive to the needs of its customers and its clients; and

"Whereas the LCBO is an important instrument for the promotion and sale of Ontario wine and thereby contributes immensely to the grape growing and wine producing industry;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its plan to turn over the sale of liquor and spirits to private liquor stores and instead retain the LCBO for this purpose."

I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in full agreement with its contents.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in particular to Premier Harris and Minister Wilson.

"We, the undersigned, will not accept any cuts to health care that would restrict our access to family doctors. It is important that a family doctor is allotted the funds to continue providing obstetrical services, hospital care, surgical assistance, hospital visits and after-hour emergency care. Please do not touch access to our family doctor."

I agree with that and sign my name to the petition.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has closed three out of five hospitals in Thunder Bay and two out of the three hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas drastic funding cuts to hospitals across Ontario are intimidating hospital boards, district health councils and local hospital restructuring commissions into considering the closing of local hospitals; and

"Whereas hospitals in the Niagara region have provided an outstanding essential service to patients and have been important facilities for medical staff to treat the residents of the Niagara Peninsula and will be required for people in Niagara for years to come; and

"Whereas the population of Niagara is on average older than that in most areas of the province;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health to restore adequate funding to hospitals in the Niagara region and guarantee that his government will not close any hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula."

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I have a petition on behalf of some 1,000-plus people who have signed this petition on rent control from the area of northern Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"To Premier Mike Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the provincial Legislature:

"Whereas to abolish rent control in favour of a market system would be disastrous for tenants and give further power and allow unnecessary profit for landlords,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to support universal and mandatory rent controls which reflect a fair balance between the ability of tenants to pay and the necessary costs of supplying well-maintained and secure buildings."

I affix my signature to that petition.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Common Sense Revolution states that a Conservative government 'will not cut health care'; and

"Whereas during the 1995 election campaign, the Conservatives clearly promised to defend the health care system by protecting ministry funding, stating in a campaign backgrounder, 'There will be no cuts to health care funding by a Harris government,' and calling this their first and most important commitment;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on the Minister of Health to reject all recommendations that would close any Hamilton area hospitals."

I support that fully and sign my signature to it.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I have here yet another petition on rent control, this time from the good people of the city of Toronto in around the Riverdale area. There seems to be some 500, 600 signatures here, and it reads as follows:

"To Premier Mike Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the provincial Legislature:

"Whereas to abolish rent control in favour of a market system would be disastrous for tenants and give further powers and allow unnecessary profit for landlords,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to support universal and mandatory rent controls which reflect a fair balance between the ability of tenants to pay and the necessary costs of supplying well-maintained and secure housing."

I affix my signature to that petition as well.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition addressed to the government of Ontario.

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse and crimes such as embezzlement and robbery;

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling with widespread temptation, will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for many years to come;

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across our province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and the desperate in order that the government can cut income taxes, to the greatest benefit of those with the highest income;

"Since the placement of video lottery terminals in bars in Ontario and in permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since Premier Mike Harris and Finance Minister Ernie Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Mike Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I'm in full agreement with its contents.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES TRIBUNAUX

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 79, An Act to improve Ontario's court system, to respond to concerns raised by charities and their volunteers and to improve various statutes relating to the administration of justice / Projet de loi 79, Loi visant à améliorer le système judiciaire de l'Ontario, à répondre aux préoccupations exprimées par les oeuvres de bienfaisance et leurs bénévoles, et à améliorer diverses lois relatives à l'administration de la justice.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Dufferin-Peel had the floor.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): He's not here.

The Speaker: Further debate, the member for Downsview.

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): Mr Speaker, may I first of all take this opportunity, since it's my first opportunity, to congratulate you as Speaker. I'm sure you will do a formidable job, and we're all looking forward to it. With your indulgence, I'll be splitting my time with the member for St Catharines.

The Speaker: Is there permission from the government side?

Ms Castrilli: Do we have permission?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr Bisson: It's called "unanimous consent."

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to split the leadoff time between the two? Agreed.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): That's a better question than "Is there permission from the government side?"

The Speaker: I'm sorry. That was probably inappropriate. I apologize. The member for Downsview.

Ms Castrilli: Calling Bill 79 the Courts Improvement Act is a sham. The stated purposes of the bill, as set out, are to amend the Courts of Justice Act to permit the appointment of case management; to change the names of Ontario courts from Ontario Court (General Division) to Superior Court of Justice and from Ontario Court (Provincial Division) to Ontario Court of Justice; to give power to make regulations under the Charities Accounting Act to the Attorney General; and to make housekeeping and minor amendments to the Courts of Justice Act and the Children's Law Reform Act.

Let me say at the beginning that I'm very much in favour of the simplified rules for charities. The kinds of provisions under this act dealing with charities certainly will be welcomed by the charities themselves, that have had to deal with a lot of bureaucratic delays in doing what is very routine activity such as purchasing insurance for directors. Certainly, with respect to that portion of the bill, part II, I am in agreement.

I look forward to assessing further the effectiveness of case managers, who are introduced under part I of the act. As you know, there have been some pilot projects with respect to case managers, and the results are still quite mixed. Whether they will be effective remains to be seen.

The real problem with the bill is that it fails miserably in addressing the fundamental and most serious problems with the justice system as we now have it. This is only a thinly veiled agenda to change the names of the courts. This is not substantive, it is not meaningful, nor is changing the names of justices meaningful or substantive.

The first thing I'd like to address is the cost of some of these changes. The member for Dufferin-Peel said yesterday that this was to avoid public confusion. If that's the case I guess we're going to have to make some changes to the courts, to the names of the courts. It's interesting to note what this will actually cost us. In fact, if you take into account that we have 160 courthouses in the province and the Toronto Star in July this year indicated that it would cost an estimated \$160,000 to \$800,000 to change the signs on those courthouses, one wonders why we're going to that trouble when we have such a serious crisis in the justice system and the minister is cutting quite significantly in his own portfolio.

The minister well knows that there are some very serious problems. Offenders are now being released on to our streets and the justice system is clearly grinding to a halt, according to some of the people who are most directly involved in the justice system, not just as politicians

I will remind the Speaker that we've had several cases this year that have been tossed out because of the crisis in the justice system, because of the lack of crown attorneys, because of the lack of facilities. These include cases that go all the way to rape. I remind the Speaker that the Toronto Sun reported on January 20 that a rape charge had been tossed out, and it wasn't the only one that was tossed out. We had several that were tossed out. It's really unbelievable to think that we would not be safe in our own homes. It's unconscionable to think that we would have to worry about our safety on the streets

because of the lack of foresight and planning of this government.

There are now 461 crown attorneys in this province, down from 481 earlier this year, and they are grappling with a caseload that is staggering — something in excess of 500,000 cases for 461 people to handle per year, and that caseload is growing. Lest people should not be aware of this, our crown attorneys are funded at the very lowest level in the country. This is what we think of our justice system. Yet we continue to cut crown attorneys; the government continues to cut court staff; the government continues to reduce funding. In total, 606 jobs and \$60 million have been yanked out of the ministry, and I'm sure very much is still to come.

You'll be interested to know that we are even facing a shortage of judges. There are some interesting statistics which you should be aware of with respect to the number of judges we have per population. In a case that came before the courts recently, September of this year as a matter of fact, the following statistics were cited: In Essex, with a population of 339,230 people, they had nine judges; in Middlesex, with a slightly higher population, 14; in Hamilton-Wentworth, almost 465,000 people, only 17 justices; in Ottawa-Carleton, with 730,000, only 15 judges; in Simcoe, with 312,000, seven judges; in Brampton, with almost a million people, 10 judges this year. This makes for some really difficult decisions for the justice system in trying to balance time, in trying to find time to try those very serious criminal cases that come before them.

Province-wide, nearly one third of all criminal cases are now on red alert. In the greater Toronto area nearly half of all the criminal cases in the Ontario Court (General Division), which deals with the most serious criminal offences, are now on red alert. Other regions are becoming equally dangerous. I refer, for instance, to a Toronto Star story of September 28 of this year which says quite clearly, "Delays Threaten 50% of Criminal Trials." What that means is that if these cases stay in the system longer than eight months, they risk being thrown out. We cannot afford another Askov crisis, in which more than 100,000 criminal cases were dropped, but that's the direction in which we're heading because we're cutting so dramatically, we're cutting without planning and we're cutting without thinking about the very real damage that will occur in society.

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You will remember that last January some of our top judges, Justices Dubin, McMurtry and Linden, wrote to the Attorney General to say that there was a crisis looming, that something needed to be done. I'd like to quote from that letter:

"It is apparent that little, if any, consideration has been given to the impact of the cuts which are being proposed on the ability of the justice system to serve the public, and the right of the public to have access to the courts. We would urge you to seek a moratorium on any cuts to the administration of justice until a proper analysis of the impact of any proposed cuts can be made. Unless this is done, we fear that the result may well be chaotic."

This is from the top judges in the province, some of the most respected legal minds in Ontario. They do not

take actions lightly. When they write to the minister to suggest that there is a crisis, we have to believe them. That crisis, frankly, is upon us.

We all remember that this government made an election promise. Their Common Sense Revolution said very clearly that they would guarantee full funding for law enforcement and justice. I wonder how that stands. How do you reconcile a promise which is so clear, which is set out in black and white, with the current actions of this government? How can you possibly reconcile the guarantee of funding vis-à-vis a cut of \$60 million and a loss of 600 jobs? That is a question for the government to answer.

I acknowledge that there have been some additional moneys invested into courthouses in several cities, but the fact remains that the system will continue to disintegrate without adequate staffing levels — without prosecutors, without court staff — above all, without a plan. All the courthouses in the world will not deal with the problem of the backlog. As I pointed out, that backlog is very real, is very critical and will have a tremendous impact on our society and on our safety.

The minister has repeatedly denied plans to lay off crown attorneys. He has denied plans to scale back prosecutions. He has denied, but all of his actions are to the contrary. The facts are clear: \$60 million has been cut, 606 jobs have been lost and the system is in chaos.

I'd like to quote Mr Justice Casey Hill, who just recently threw out a criminal charge due to the intolerable delays, who placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the government. He said, "To the extent that there exists institutional governmental recklessness arising from insufficient resources, this cannot be condoned by the courts." The courts are being put in an impossible position of having to deal with a situation not of their making, a situation which they consider to be unjust but over which they have no power to act.

We all know that more recently Madam Justice Lang spoke out very strongly on the growing chaos within the courts due to the funding reductions. In a memo she outlines the layoffs of file clerks, useless statistics on numbers and kinds of cases heard by the courts in the Toronto region, long delays, significant delays in issuing and entering judgements of court orders, profound data entry problems, problems of courtroom security. This is as recently as October 1 of this year. Madam Justice Lang attributes the problems to the implementation of budget cutbacks before the implementation of considered efficiencies; in other words, no planning, just cuts.

The minister's failure to act quickly and substantively is contributing to the problem. With his policy of cut now and Band-Aid later, it's a bogged-down criminal justice system that will continue until the real solutions are implemented, and it is the reason this piece of legislation is of no real value.

It has been suggested that the minister will further slash crown prosecutors as soon as caseloads have been reduced. He plans to avoid prosecuting certain crimes, such as break and enter and threats and fraud. Imagine encouraging that kind of behaviour by not prosecuting it any more. At a time when we have increased poverty, at a time when we have increased unemployment, at a time

when people are losing their jobs, this is the very time that we decide not to prosecute break and enters. It's giving a licence to people to steal. It's creating tremendous anxiety in the community. It is creating tremendous anxiety particularly among the most vulnerable, our seniors who still live at home, who face the prospect of not having these crimes prosecuted and therefore encouraged.

A prosecution blitz, I suggest, is no longer a matter of choice, it's a necessity, yet it is still only a temporary solution. But because what we have right now is an unmanageable backlog of cases before us I would call for a halt to all further funding reductions and, from emergency round table discussions between people who understand the system, who are involved in the system, individuals who have already criticized the system from within, suggest that it's time for action, that we cannot just think of the bottom line, that there is a social cost here; that it is also fundamental that we give access to our courts to individuals. The present system simply does not do that.

There are many other issues within the justice sectors that require close attention. In the wake of this government's determination to slash spending within the family support plan, for instance, single parents and children have suffered as their cheques have been delayed in the bureaucratic shuffle.

Community-based solutions have been ignored. Instead, what we have done is institute 1-800 numbers, 1-900 numbers, making it even more difficult for people to find justice and to find solutions and to find an equitable way to deal with the problems they have to face on a daily basis.

The victims' services: There was a good-news announcement a while back, you may remember, about how moneys collected through the victims' justice fund should be returned to local communities, a move that I certainly applaud. Yet earlier this year the government withdrew \$10.2 million from the fund and failed to assure victims that this assistance will continue beyond two years; nor has it explained what it intends to do with the remaining millions.

Victims have been asking for an explanation. In spite of the assurances that were given that these moneys would be there to assist them, they have been worried that they will not be there. I think it's time that the government makes it clear what it intends to do with that fund and makes it clear to victims that they should not be victimized once again by the government, having been victimized before by criminals.

For a month the Attorney General sat on the sidelines while the legal aid system was brought to the brink of collapse.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The topics being raised by the opposition at this particular point in time are dealing with her role as a critic of the Attorney General's office. She's going through a whole slew of topics which have absolutely nothing to do with this bill. It may be with respect to a general critique of the Attorney General's office, but not with respect to this bill. I would hope that she would stick to the topic.

Ms Castrilli: Mr Speaker, I think the comments I am making are exactly the point. We have a justice system that is in shambles and what we've got from the government is nothing more than platitudes, and that's what this bill is all about. I think it's entirely appropriate to show the shortcomings of a government that does not really take seriously the justice system and the crisis that it faces.

1530

As I was saying, for months the Attorney General sat on the sidelines while the legal aid system was brought to the brink of collapse, an essential component of the justice system that ensures access to justice by ordinary Ontarians. That has created tremendous difficulty for people as they have tried to access the courts. Let us remember that the courts are not just for the rich, they're not just for the wealthy; they're for all of us. Justice is supposed to be blind and it's supposed to be blind also to our bank accounts. The kind of system that we have now does not make it possible for ordinary people to access the system fairly. We have in fact very few lawyers who are willing to take legal aid cases, and those numbers decrease daily.

I'd also like to remind the members that following the Galligan report into Karla Homolka's plea bargain agreement, I asked for the commitment of the minister to develop plea bargain guidelines, because that's another area where there has been significant concern on the part of the public not only in Ontario but throughout Canada. People have been very concerned that criminals can bargain their way to freedom without any kind of guidelines, without any kind of rules, without any kind of public accountability.

I asked for the minister's commitment to develop plea bargaining guidelines and in fact I was given that commitment on at least one occasion in this House. But up till now, we have seen nothing. I think that's very serious. I think we need to ask that there be very clear rules for that aspect of the justice system and that there be a time frame for implementation, because the wounds that have followed the consequences of the Karla Homolka and Bernardo tragedies remain with us and remain with the Ontario public, and it's up to us to make sure that those kinds of things do not happen again.

We've seen other cuts which have included reduced funding for partners in community safety programs, and certainly in halfway houses and the Ontario Provincial Police. Particularly in the area of halfway houses I'd like to focus just a moment of your attention. The justice committee of this House investigated the whole issue of the abolition of halfway houses. Every expert who came before us said: "You cannot abolish them. They are a necessary component of the justice system. They're a necessary component of the rehabilitation process. They're a necessary part of a continuum of justice if we are to have a successful system." Yet the alternative, as far as the government is concerned, would be electronic monitoring, which is not a deterrent, as we found out from some of the expert witnesses who came before us. It isn't even a deterrent, because 50% of people who are on electronic monitoring offend while they're on electronic monitoring. The whole point of halfway houses

was to provide a bridge between the justice system and the community.

Not to mention the cuts in the provincial police: Again, I remind you that the Common Sense Revolution said very clearly, "There will be no cuts to law enforcement and to justice." I had occasion to ask the chief of the police union about this, and I asked him, "What do you think that meant?" He said, "I thought it meant no cuts." Well, of course we've had cuts. Those cuts threatened severely our justice system and our ability to have a safe and secure province.

As if that weren't enough, we've had the announcement just last Friday that the administration of justice offices in Thunder Bay and Brampton will be closing — more jobs lost, less justice available, less accessibility to justice.

In short, what we have here is a bill that is misnamed. It is not an act to improve Ontario's court system. It isn't that at all. It's an act to change the names of the courts, it's an act to change the names of the justices, it's an act to provide some assistance to charities, but it by no means is an act to improve Ontario's court system.

For all of the reasons I've outlined, this act is deficient, and I wish the Attorney General and the government had the courage to bring in legislation that truly dealt with the problems and truly dealt with reforming our court system, which, as I've indicated, is in desperate need of reform.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): For anybody who didn't hear the ruling on the point, the point of order is that a person must speak towards the subject involved, and the Speaker saw nothing the matter with the comments being made.

The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I recognize your wisdom in this regard. Your flexibility has to be commended by all members of the Legislature who recognize that in dealing with these bills there are many peripheral issues that we like to bring into it, because it's all part of the justice system. I appreciate your ruling in that particular case. I think it's a very wise one.

I look at this bill, as my colleague from Downsview has, as essentially an excuse to change the name of the courts. Its effect on really streamlining the system so that it can be more effective is minimal, if I may have a somewhat objective look at it. It's objective because I'm not a lawyer and I have no job in the judicial system, nor do I ever intend to have a job in the judicial system.

But I want to look at what has essentially happened that has slowed down the process. First of all, I think you, Mr Speaker, as all of us who represent constituents across the province, convey to the House or to whomever we can the feeling that people are frustrated at a court system that allows some people to go free. In this particular case, they were allowed to go free because of decisions that are made by the court that it is taking too long to bring a person to justice.

Perhaps I can be accused of erring on the side of wanting to see those who are potentially guilty brought to justice, as opposed to the strict legal interpretations that lawyers may be preoccupied with. I happen to be very

concerned when I see that cases are dropped solely because the case has not been brought to court in sufficient time to satisfy certain of the judges. That means that people who have been charged with a crime, who have had police departments working on a case, who have had the crown attorneys, or as most would know them, the prosecutors, working on a case have those cases abandoned. So the time, in essence, spent on a case already has been somewhat of a waste of time, and we're not even going to see the case come to fruition; that is, a decision by the court on whether the accused is guilty or not guilty and what penalty shall be meted out if the person is guilty. That's frustrating to the average person who doesn't follow the court system carefully.

I've been in a court only once and that was representing the province of Ontario in a court in Detroit against the authority which was building the new incinerator in the city of Detroit. They wanted to have that incinerator constructed with only electrostatic precipitators instead of the scrubber baghouse technology which was required.

I found it a fascinating experience, you'll be interested to know, Mr Speaker, because you have to make judgments in this regard. One actually had to answer the questions when the lawyers put questions to an individual on the stand. Having been a minister in years gone by, I had to be reminded several times by the judge in the Detroit court to answer the question instead of dealing with some other matters, as ministers are wont to do in this House, and it was a rather shocking experience.

But I digress. I want to go back to the legislation itself. I want to address myself to that.

I know there has been some courthouse construction, and I think that's important enough. It's important because we need the facilities. There are some planned in Windsor, Hamilton and Cornwall, for instance, and there's a consideration of new facilities in Peel, and some renovations have taken place at 361 University Avenue in Toronto. I want to say that some of that has been good and positive, and I think that will be helpful. I don't think you'll get any objection from members of the opposition there.

1540

Where I'm concerned is when I see the government foisting upon the Attorney General, who surely could not want this to happen, considerable cuts in the number of people available to deal with the cases in the court. I become concerned. I side with the Attorney General when in private he has to go to cabinet to describe this, then come to the House and nod his head in a sideways motion when he must defend the government policies.

It is clear that a shortage of personnel is the most serious problem that we have in Ontario at this time. There are, as of September 23, 1996, only 461 prosecutors in Ontario. That's down from 481 earlier this year. The government has not replaced 20 crown attorneys lost through attrition this year, and indications are that this trend will continue. The crowns that remain on staff face ever-increasing caseloads.

A former colleague of mine in the Legislature, on the governing side at that time, a former Attorney General of this province, the Honourable Roy McMurtry, Chief Justice in Ontario at this time, "has called for more

judges and staff for the Ontario Court of Appeal, saying it will be unable to resolve cases within the case management framework recommended by the Civil Justice Review. Chief Justice McMurtry has stated that US appeal courts have at least four to five times the number of judges, law clerks and lawyers for the same caseload, and that Ontario also has fewer appellate judges per capita than other Canadian provinces." Who am I to second-guess the former Attorney General of the province of Ontario, I think a former member for Eglinton and a man well respected in the judicial community and in the law community for his many years of service in this House and now on the bench?

"These problems will not be solved or addressed by the creation of new court facilities, though they are helpful, or by changing the names of courts or by spending public funds on new signs, letterheads and official forms. One study commissioned by the Association of Law Officers of the Crown has shown that if the government is forced by the staffing cuts to look to outside counsel for legal advice and representation in civil matters, it will end up costing the province tens of millions of dollars, as outside lawyers working on government contracts tend to bill at about \$169 per hour, as opposed to the \$110 per hour effectively paid to government lawyers."

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I heard the interjection from the Attorney General, who said that they are going to, on contract, hire individuals for this purpose. We see, in this particular case, Justice McMurtry suggesting that the costs will be excessive. Again, I would ever hate to doubt or question Chief Justice McMurtry in matters of this kind, with his knowledge, background and experience in this field. The Attorney General smiles.

As far as the charities regulation is concerned, there are some good things in this, I think. "The action to be taken in this bill will avoid the need for charities to obtain court approval for technical issues involving no serious dispute, such as using funds to purchase insurance." I think some would want to help out the charities in that regard.

I noticed in the World's Biggest Bookstore in Toronto that there was a book on sale by Walter Stewart, apparently on charities in Ontario. I must read that. I think it's Walter Stewart, who has written several books. This one is new. I think it's about \$29, so I might be able to afford this one, even on the meagre salary that is paid in this House. I intend to read that because it may have some effect on the ramifications of this bill.

It's clear that this so-called Courts Improvement Act is a thin disguise for the government's true agenda; that is, to change the name of Ontario courts for the second time — I know the member for Etobicoke-Humber must be shocked at this, and Etobicoke-Rexdale as well — in five years. Both these individuals are people who have said that they want to see a halt in unnecessary government expenditures. Here we have an example of it. I would hate to think what the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore would have to say, having read some of his comments on other matters before the House, comments with which I find myself in full agreement. I hope he

does write more op ed pieces for the Toronto Star, because they are very informative for the general public.

"This needless and costly change does nothing to address the real and serious problems confronting our justice system at this time. This pointless exercise will not deal with the fictional public confusion about the courts. In fact, by changing the name of the courts for the second time in five years, this bill is likely to worsen, not reduce, public confusion."

I would suggest that most members of this assembly who are not lawyers couldn't tell you one court from another court, in any event. Just when we get used to calling them by one name, Mr Speaker, you and I will now have to find out what the new name is and read all the signs that go with it.

"Perhaps this change" — no, I'd better not read that part because it suggests something about Superior Court justices that I cannot prove.

"Whatever the reason, there's no justification for the waste of what could amount to be \$2.5 million of taxpayers' moneys on new signs and letterhead for the 160 courthouses across Ontario."

If there was one thing this government wanted to be certain about, it was to eliminate these kind of unnecessary expenditures. No doubt, tomorrow morning, when the government caucus meets with the cabinet in full caucus, the members of the back bench of the government will be raising this issue and asking why they could possibly want to waste \$2.5 million in taxpayers' money on new signs and letterhead for the 160 courthouses across Ontario. They will no doubt challenge this, and I encourage them to do so. After they have finished challenging the Minister of Health over the hospitals he's closing, they'll want to get on to this issue.

"It is absolutely inexcusable for this government to be fiddling about with name changes, spending taxpayers' money on new courthouse signs and letterhead, while a court backlog crisis threatens 50% of criminal cases on the books in Metro, while the government continues to allow the number of prosecutors to dwindle, while even Ontario's Chief Justice is calling for more judges and staff to handle the existing caseload."

This must concern the member from Rexdale, who is a fiscal conservative.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): More than you'd ever know.

Mr Bradley: That's probably true.

"The resurrection of case management masters may be helpful in speeding up the resolution of civil court cases in Ontario." We welcome any measures that might achieve that goal, so I want to be positive; I don't want to be negative throughout this. I find some good things in the bill and I find some bad things. Sometimes they come back: They're removed by one government, then another government has a look at them and they will do it. I'm prepared to be positive and constructive in my comments where I feel the government is doing the right thing and I'll be negative when they are not.

"However, this measure will do nothing to resolve the serious problem unless the government plans to invest proper resources and planning and appoints sufficient masters to handle the vast volume of work. The govern-

ment has already failed to show its commitment to ensuring there's a sufficient number of judges or prosecutors."

Let's see why the government is doing some of these things. It's obvious, as my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has said on many occasions, that the tax cut is part of this. There is a debate in the United States as well, and a debate nationally here. The federal Progressive Conservative Party thought it would be attractive. Despite the caution of John Crosbie, an eminent and wise individual in the former government of Prime Minister Mulroney, who cautioned that at this time they cannot afford a tax cut, the YPCs — there are other names that members use for them here; they are more extreme in their opinions than regular members of the Conservative caucus, I'm told — persuaded the government they should move in this direction.

1550

But I want to say that if the government is to deliver its 30% cut in the provincial income tax, a cut which will benefit the wealthiest and most privileged people in our society the most, it's going to cost us in services in this province. I would prefer to see the quality of life enhanced in Ontario rather than putting more money back in my pocket through a cut in the provincial income tax.

I would say I want to see that quality of life increased for the people of Rexdale, for the people of Wellington and Peel, for the people of Stayner, Owen Sound and other places. The member for Grey-Owen Sound is here this afternoon. He will know what I'm talking about when I say that the quality of life is diminishing for people in this province when the government unwisely implements cuts so it can finance a tax cut.

I remember the member for Grey-Owen Sound was critical of the tax cut, not because he said people wouldn't like to have it, but he said that in his area — and I read the Owen Sound Sun Times very often; it's one of my favourite newspapers. He noted that in his area they're closing hospitals and they're diminishing the number of teachers in schools and there's a real problem out there that the member for Grey-Owen Sound and I, who don't always agree on matters, both agree on. Certainly I think the court system would be the same. If I asked the member for Grey-Owen Sound or any member of this House, "Do you want to see people going free because a case can't be brought to court and proceeded with in an appropriate period of time?" they'd say, "No, let's put the resources forward." It's happened in the past and everybody's tried to address it.

The Attorney General will be eager, as will the parliamentary assistant, to say, "Well, what happened back in the years when you people were in power?" Indeed it's been an ongoing problem. I thought this government would address it because I well remember the member for Willowdale, the good opposition critic that he was — and I hope he has the opportunity to serve in that capacity again because he was very good as an opposition critic in the field of justice. I remember his bringing to this House the issue of courts and how slow the courts were and what that was meaning for cases before the courts. But when I see them cutting prosecutors, and my friend the member for Wentworth North who was a prosecutor would understand this, and not

having sufficient number of judges, we're going to see people going free who shouldn't be going free. And all this in the context of fewer police officers as well. So the justice system is in difficulty.

In Metropolitan Toronto today they have far fewer police officers than they had five years ago and many of our Conservative friends would suggest that the crime cases are more significant today than they were then, and yet I see them cutting the number of police, the number of prosecutors and the number of judges. I wonder how, on one hand, they can be extremely right-wing and anti-crime, but with the other hand they are pulling away the resources from the justice system to deal with these problems. Certainly in the social services system we see the funds being withdrawn there, where the problems originate.

I'm pleased to be able to discuss the bill as a non-lawyer, as an objective observer of this House, a bill which has some features which I think are commendable and are supportable and some features which I think are not. I could go into some considerable detail on these matters, but I think that members of this House have had sufficient contribution from me in this regard.

I'm going to be listening as I did listen with interest to the member for Downsview on her observations as a person steeped in expertise in the legal field. I'll be interested in the former Attorney General, the member for London Centre, and her observations and those of others in this House who are perhaps more familiar with the intricate details of the ramifications of this legislation.

But sufficient to say, Mr Speaker, as I know you will agree in your heart of hearts, that if this government is truly committed to bringing about a good justice system in this province, to fighting crime in this province, it would restore the number of police officers and increase them, it would restore the number of prosecutors and increase them, and restore the number of judges and increase them to process this. We do not get a quality of life without being prepared to invest the funds in that quality of life.

I know that tomorrow morning, having heard this speech and others, my good friends in the Conservative caucus will confront the parliamentary assistant and the Attorney General and the real people who run the government, the advisers of the Premier, who will be there to put the case forward, and instead of simply applauding — as they have to in the House, and I understand that — the minister and the Premier and being nice to the advisers to the Premier, behind closed doors when you have the opportunity, you will do as the new Speaker of the House used to do in his former incarnation as a backbench member of the Conservative Party. You will call the authorities to task and demand that we have a justice system which is appropriately financed and supported by this government.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tilson: The members for St Catharines and Downsview have made some interesting comments. I'd like to correct some of the things they're talking about. They have talked about how this bill is going to result in a tremendous cost to the taxpayer of this province, and

they refer to the changing of signs on courthouses and other such things.

I can tell you that the town that I come from, which is a town called Orangeville, has a courthouse. There are many rural courthouses around this province that all have a sign on their front lawn. And you know what it says? It doesn't say "The Ontario Court of Justice" or "The Ontario Court (General Division)" or "The Ontario Court (Provincial Division)"; it says "Courthouse." That's the sign that you're suggesting is going to cost zillions of dollars for changing it. I can say that you'd better start looking at some of the signs that you're talking about that are going to result in those costs.

With respect to the stationery or the forms of the current system, the government has thought that out very carefully. Again, if you review the legislation and the paperwork that has been put forward by our ministry, you will see that it'll take one year after the bill has been proclaimed for the new documentation to take effect. So there is going to be absolutely zero cost with respect to the introduction of this bill.

This whole bill, if you listened to my comments last week, was started by your government. When I say "your government," I mean the Liberal government, the continuation of the amendment to the process that you started off. In fact, the 60,000 cases that were turfed out weren't the fault of the Askov case, they weren't the fault of the NDP government. They were the fault of your government, and they took the blame for it. As a result of your actions, or your inactions, that caused that terrible disgrace, unfortunately the NDP had to take the blame for that.

Mr Speaker, I guess my time has expired.

Mr Bisson: I recognize, as do many people in this House, that this bill deals with civil law, not with criminal law, but none the less the member did make mention of the police. I think it comes back to what we talked about in this House a little while ago, which is that this government is doing a raft of reforms that don't do a heck of a lot to advance the cause of the people of this province. It has more to do with following somewhat of a corporate agenda.

I look at what they're doing in the police, all of it to pay for the tax cut, and I recognize that this is the Attorney General's bill, but none the less it's being rumoured that the Solicitor General will pass the costs of policing in communities like Iroquois Falls, Cochrane, Matheson, Manitouwadge and other communities that are now being patrolled by the Ontario Provincial Police directly on to the residents of those communities, a service that used to be paid for by the province of Ontario, that was run by the province of Ontario and that was funded by provincial tax dollars.

What is this government doing in order to pay for its tax cut so that the wealthy in this province can make a buck through their tax cut? They're transferring the cost of that on to those municipalities. All of this at a time when the government, when it was in third place, ran on the Common Sense Revolution, which said, "There is only one taxpayer." I remember that quite well. They said, "We're not going to offload any of our responsibilities on to the lower levels of government." They weren't

going to do such a thing, and they were going to work with municipalities to try to figure out ways to become more efficient.

In speaking to mayors across northeastern Ontario, more specifically to the mayors of Cochrane South, Mr Power and Mr Graham, they say to me: "Hey, these guys aren't talking to us. They aren't coming to us and saying how they're going to deal with the question of being able to have the local citizens pay for police." Not at all. They're doing that behind closed doors, they're making their own decisions about how they're going to do it and the people who are affected don't even have their say. So I think the member for St Catharines, although that particular point wasn't directly related to this bill, does make a good point and I think the people of Ontario are starting to wise up to what this government is really doing.

1600

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to reply to the speech by the member for St Catharines, eloquent as always. I was very pleased that the member for St Catharines made reference to Chief Justice McMurtry, the wise judge and very good politician that he was when he was the Attorney General, because it's quite simply the recommendation of Chief Justice McMurtry that caused us to review the name of the court. That is exactly why we took the step we did: to avoid confusion, to name the court in a way that's consistent with the way the court is referred to in most statutes, to be consistent with other provinces. It also bears noting that the reference to justices and calling judges of the provincial court "justice" was something that was passed by a Liberal government in the late 1980s and never proclaimed. We will now be proclaiming a section that will refer to provincial court judges as justices.

The other thing I want to touch on is the reference that was made by the member for St Catharines to reductions in the complement of crown attorneys. I've been very clear that there will not be any reductions to the complement of crown attorneys. At the present time, we have a full complement of crown attorneys. There will not be any reductions to the complement of crown attorneys. On top of that group of very dedicated men and women, we also have per diem crowns who supplement their numbers. We will continue to use those per diem people as needed.

The other thing that I'd like to tell you is that there was a reference by the member for Downsview that the crown attorneys in the province of Ontario are the worst paid in the country. I've spoken with the member from Hamilton, Mr Skarica, a former crown attorney. He assures me that crown attorneys in this province are the best paid in the country.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I find it passing strange that the minister could get up and then talk as he just did in this place, knowing all his government has done to destroy the system of justice that has been built up over the years in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: The comments are to the speakers.

Mr Martin: Okay. I guess I'll just agree with the speaker in everything she said in condemning the minister and the things he's doing to the justice system in this province. It's amazing that no area is left untouched by this government in its attempt to diminish the role of government, to take away from people the very rights we've all fought for over the years, side by side, so that we can be held up as one of the most progressive and caring countries in the whole world. Ontario, in Canada, is seen as a jurisdiction that people everywhere would give their soul to come and live in. Because of the system of justice that we have in place people have access to the courts. The cuts that are being made by this government are just unbelievable.

When you think about it, in my own community the number of people now who used to have access to legal aid and the community legal clinics and all the different institutions that were put in place over the years by your government when it was in power before, by the Liberal government, supported and improved on by the NDP government when we were in power, now all that has been taken away, all that is as so much sand with water poured on it — it's disappearing. I'm concerned and I certainly stand toe to toe with the members from the Liberal Party as they stand up and condemn this government for the very drastic and damaging cuts it's making. There's nothing in this government's —

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. The member for Downsview.

Ms Castrilli: I'll just make a few comments, first with respect to comments made by the member for Dufferin-Peel. I don't recall ever suggesting the Askov case was anyone's fault. I was simply pointing out, as judges have pointed out, that we have a very serious situation which approximates what happened then. We're talking about 50% of cases in Metro Toronto and 33% of cases in Ontario that are now on red alert and are capable of being thrown out. They've been in the system almost eight months. That's the significance of the Askov decision that the government needs to be aware of and cannot fudge with and cannot try to blame on anyone else.

I also want to challenge what the Attorney General has said. The fact is that the number of crown attorneys is down from 481 to 461 and the funding of crown attorneys is at the lowest level. Those aren't figures that we made up; they come from the crown attorneys' association itself. Mr Skarica notwithstanding, the reality is that we fund our system at the lowest level in Canada. It shows, and that is why we have the crisis we have at this point in time.

This bill is really about people's safety, accessibility to the justice system and fairness. This bill does pretend that it improves the system. It's called an act to improve Ontario's court system but will do very little to improve the system, give accessibility, give justice, give fairness and give people security in their own homes and on the streets. I think it's not named properly and it is unforgivable that the government should try to dupe the people of Ontario by suggesting it is anything other than a renaming of the courts.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I am delighted to have an opportunity to stand and speak on this act. I will differ with my friends from the Liberal Party in talking about this act. I will attempt, at least, to use the time I have to help people understand why this is an important improvement in the courts. It's not perfect, and in the course of my remarks I will talk about the things that concern me that are not in this act that would have made it much more responsive to the kinds of suggestions that were made by the Civil Justice Review.

None the less, let me say that I empathize with the Attorney General. It is very difficult to get the people of Ontario to understand what a huge transformation is happening in the court system. It's important for us to recognize that transformation is long overdue. While it would be improper, probably, to suggest that the system has been limping along using quill pens, it's not too far from the truth. In fact, the system has not evolved, has not changed to the extent it ought to have to meet the needs of the system.

The person who began that change was the former Attorney General, a member of the Liberal Party, who made the first big changes in terms of the court system. Those changes went into effect in 1990. I think it's important for people to understand that those changes caused a great deal of disruption and bad feeling within the justice system. They were done rather abruptly, with what the members of the courts, various levels of the courts, felt was not enough consultation. It was done in a way that was not explained to the general public, and that's why it's important for us to use this occasion to talk about why these are important changes and why it's necessary for us to understand a little bit more about how our justice system works.

While I would not suggest that the Askov situation occurred simply because of the disruption and dismay — need I say what has been described to me by various people as actual despair — within the court system, it had its effect. For the system to work appropriately, it needs to have the strong support of all members of the system. Quite frankly, the disruption that was caused by those changes caused a great deal of ill feeling and, I would suggest, contributed to some real difficulties that our government then experienced in carrying on some of the changes from there.

That's why I'd like to deal first with this issue around the change of names of the courts. I'm comforted this afternoon, and certainly we will all be watching to make sure that the Attorney General's word is kept, that changing the name of the court will not have the kinds of costs that have been speculated about in the press. The reality is that in order for the changes to occur, there needs to be a real buy-in and a better understanding of the levels of justice that are there within the court system.

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It is important for the Attorney General to make a change which will be seen as supportive of the justices at all levels in order for them to be active and enthusiastic participants in the change, because the change that's being implied by putting in place a case management system is a huge change. It requires the buy-in of all the participants within the system. It is important that when

there have been irritations that may seem trivial to us — certainly I, like the member for St Catharines, have no vested interest here. I'm not a lawyer and I certainly never intend to be part of the judicial system and have no desire to be, but I understand that for those who are part of the judicial system, a name is more than a name.

For many of the justices, because they deal with their counterparts all over the country, they have found it particularly demeaning that their superior court is not seen as being a superior court. In fact, I can remember both the late Chief Justice Callaghan and the former Chief Justice Dubin saying to me in very passionate terms that it was hard for me to understand why this was such an issue for them, but it would be easier for me to understand if we didn't call our ministers in government "ministers" but every other province did. It is important for us to understand that that is true. It is particularly true of a profession where, frankly, the terminology of pecking order is no small thing. It is a profession that puts a lot of its emphasis on the relationship between different levels of competence, different levels of practice, and pursues within itself a real pecking order depending on the level of experience that people have. It is not surprising that people set a lot of store by a name in that kind of system.

I think we should get away from that. I need to be very clear that I don't think that's very healthy in an institution, that I think we probably depend far too much on titles, that it is important for us to understand that titles don't make the person. But in the practical circumstances that are being faced by the current government in implementing massive changes that were begun by the Liberal government when it was in power, were continued by our government and now fall to their lot to continue to pursue, it is important that these kinds of irritations disappear.

I will say to the minister that while I wish it weren't necessary and I wish we all could really ignore this kind of hierarchical naming, I understand why it is important for the minister to include this in this bill and why it is part of the price he is paying to get the cooperation he needs to make the huge changes that are implied.

It's really important for the people who are listening to this debate to understand that this bill has nothing to do with criminal process in law except by extension. In other words, this is talking about the civil side of the law — a very undramatic, often unromantic area of law, and one which people who have not come in contact with civil law often fail to appreciate. But it is a part of the law that affects the largest number of people in a very direct way, because of course all of family law is part of civil law, Small Claims Court is part of the civil process, and then of course all of the tort system that goes through is part of that civil justice system. All of those areas affect, indeed, the quality of life for people, and often in a more direct way than a criminal process does. The criminal process affects us when we are the victim or the witness to a criminal act. It affects all of us as a society because it makes us feel less safe. But the civil law is the law that we can appeal to in terms of maintaining quality of life through many different ways. So it is an important part,

yet it's very hard to get those who are not engaged in civil law to understand how much it affects the day-to-day life of individuals.

One of the ways in which we tried to do that in our government was to have the process of the civil law review, to try to have a process that involved members of the public as well as those who are engaged in the judiciary, in the legal professions, to actually look at the process that goes on through the civil justice system and to take some responsibility for designing the kinds of changes that need to be made.

The process that we went through with the civil justice review — and the parliamentary assistant referred in his introductory remarks to the great debt this bill owes to that process — was probably one of the more stimulating exercises that one could have in terms of looking at a change of this sort, because it was a process that engaged all of those who had had experience, one way or another, through representatives of the public, the judiciary, the courts administration and, of course, lawyers. So the recommendations that came forward didn't look at the law strictly from the point of view of the legal profession or from the judicial point of view or from an administrative point of view; we had the input of the public into that whole process, and that was extraordinarily important.

I should tell you that those who conducted the civil law review were, quite bluntly, blown away by the dissatisfaction expressed by people within the general population when they went out to consultation in many communities around Ontario, when they heard of the way in which people were feeling victimized by the untimeliness of the court process, by the difficulty of getting their issues dealt with in a prompt and clear way, by their belief that the extension of time over which these issues were being considered led to more acrimony and indeed more adversarial concerns, and that this was costing us all, as a system, a great deal.

The advice that was given was blunt. In many cases it was words that those judicial members of the committee had never heard used to them before about the system. It called upon all of those within the legal profession to really look not only at the conduct of the judiciary but at the conduct of lawyers themselves in terms of prolonging this whole system.

The changes that the Attorney General has introduced in Bill 79 are only a small part of the process that is required in order to case-manage this system. I'm going to read from page 181 of the Civil Justice Review, because I think it is important for us to understand what case management is all about. First of all, reading from page 175 of the report, the study that was done of a number of case management projects undertaken under our government and that came out in 1993 indicated:

"(a) that case management has reduced the delay between most stages in proceedings and substantially reduced the overall passage of time from commencement to resolution;

"(b) that less overall time spent on case-managed files by the bar and the public resulted in lower overall costs; and

"(c) that the cost per file of administering case-managed cases to resolution is significantly lower than that of administering non-case-managed files."

In other words, we took the process of trying out case management over a number of years and in different models in this province over the last five years.

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We have the data now and reports on how that worked on which the current minister could base this kind of recommendation to the Legislature. It's something we should all be very proud of and we should give credit where credit is due, because for those judges and those court administrators who had the courage to go forward and try these things out, life wasn't always easy. In fact, they frequently found themselves the recipients of all of the frustration that members of the public and indeed their colleagues had been feeling over a number of years.

But it was tried out and it was evaluated. There were a number of evaluations that were made and universally the decision was, and I'm going to read from page 176 in the report:

"Evaluation of the pilot projects has demonstrated that case management had reduced the time during which cases receive services from the court; the number of services received; and, in some jurisdictions, the number of very expensive services — trials — received. Not surprisingly, then, our review of administrative costs on a per-file basis...underscores the potential for long-term savings following a reasonable period of adjustment. Over time, case management can reasonably be expected to result in a net decrease in administrative operating costs."

This goes on in the report at great length because it's terribly important for us to understand that the objective is to get the cases through the court in a timely fashion. The objective is to resolve these disputes, but if the ministry in the way in which they organize case management can do that in a way that also saves costs, surely we all ought to be prepared to give them some credit for that.

It's important, however, for us to really understand what a massive change this is and how many barriers there are to implementing such a change. One of the reports that was done by Quindecia, who looked at the case management systems that we had used, the models that had been used, said:

"At the same time, the biggest hurdles" — these are the biggest hurdles to case management — "have come from within the ranks of the active participants: bench officers who do not support or enforce the case management rules; lawyers who abuse the system with repeated motions for extension of time; and administrative staff who delayed in providing an adequate infrastructure to support case management operations. These hurdles, however, were not and are not so formidable that they cannot be overcome. And, in fact, many have already been resolved."

"Perhaps, however, the single most important byproduct of the case management system and the one that is not easily quantified is the numbers of believers in the case management program. Whether the numbers support the final conclusions or not, it is vital that the program's success be measured by whether the people

who were hopefuls" — in other words, hopeful of a change — "had actually become believers in the system. The mere presence of believers in the system (judges, lawyers and staff)" — and, I might add, the public — "all point to a measure of success — one which may not be quantifiable, but which has a far more significant effect on the program than the ones that are quantifiable. It is especially encouraging that these believers comprise their number from people who have been involved in the program and people who have seen the practical results."

So, for once, this government is taking action based on experience, based on real experience, real testing out of a change, an evaluation of that and a testing that in fact tells us that they are on the right track in many ways with what they are proposing.

I really want to get on the record why this is such an important change, because it is one of those technical kinds of details, one of those things that it is hard for people to appreciate. Let me read again from the Civil Justice Review, on page 180. This is a quote from the report to the review from the 12 case management judges on the Toronto civil project, who were led by Mr Justice Douglas Coe. The report concluded:

"Case management is the way of the future. The judges in the Toronto region, who have been involved in either the original calendar system or in the team, support the expansion to 100% case management for all civil cases in the Toronto region, other than commercial, family and landlord and tenant. The team system has worked well. There need to be some adjustments to the rules to expand the use of registrars to deal with all the routine time extensions and to sign consent orders. As well, time needs to be allocated to allow judges to conduct follow-up appointments during the regular sitting day for the small number of files that would benefit from follow-up with one judge. A fixed, predictable trial date is a cornerstone of case management. Cases will not settle without a fixed date. There are not sufficient judges to hear the necessary trials, if judges are also expected to do motions presently being conducted by the masters. Additional judicial assistance is required to assist with routine contested motions. The restoration and expansion of the masters is the way to provide this much-needed assistance. As well, significant improvements in the system could be achieved. Mandatory early conferences at the close of pleading and trial scheduling conferences, both conducted by masters, would promote early settlement and would result in fewer, shorter trials."

So it's quite clear that the judges who were involved — and, I may say, not all terribly enthusiastic at the beginning of the experiment — felt that this was the way to go, but they very clearly said they needed the support of what the Civil Justice Review calls "judicial support officers" in order to accomplish that task. Otherwise there would need to be a huge increase in the numbers of judges, and the likelihood of the federal government agreeing to the numbers that would be required under the section 96 approval system that they have is unlikely. The federal government pays for our justices, and it is important for us to understand that any changes we as a jurisdiction need to make in terms of streamlining our process cannot assume that we are going to get

more than our share of the number of judicial positions the federal Liberal government is prepared to fund.

It's important for us to know that within the context of our own situation here in Ontario, we are limited in what we can do. So the solution of having additional support officers, what the minister has chosen to call case management masters, was taken.

I should say that I have tried ever since I became Attorney General to determine why the previous minister, Ian Scott, removed the class of masters out of the picture in the judicial system. I have never received a particular explanation that told me why all of a sudden we found ourselves in a situation where no more masters were to be appointed. Masters are not well understood by the general public because they are seen as being quasi-judicial — they are quasi-judicial. In fact, they performed, in very selected areas of the province, only three places — here in Toronto, in Ottawa, and in London —

Hon Mr Harnick: Windsor.

Mrs Boyd: — oh, and in Windsor — the specific function of moving motions along, a specific function of doing some of the preliminary work necessary to get a case to trial. That's pretty unglamorous, so a lot of people didn't even understand the importance of them.

As I say, I have no idea why that whole class of people was removed by the previous government. I know we did not believe we should reinstate them at the same level as they had been there in the previous legislation. We believed that it was important to have judicial support officers for whom we had a great deal more flexibility than we did under the old appointment procedures for masters and that we needed to find a way to appoint these people that accorded with the kind of appointment process that had been set up under the Liberal Courts of Justice Act.

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So we knew in our government and in our process with going forward with the Civil Justice Review that some solution needed to be found to this kind of position that was necessary in order to move things along. We knew that there were not going to be more justices appointed in overall terms and that if we were going to have a more efficient and effective system, we had to find some way to do it.

It's really important, I think, that the tone set by the Civil Justice Review around case management be prolonged, that the tone and the understanding of the importance of this change as described in the report be understood by everyone. I'd like to read from the report again. It actually quotes the Quindecim report again, summarizing it. It says:

"Case management is not about single acts of herculean effort, though sometimes these are required to take a project over the hump or to reduce the backlog. Instead, case management is about institutionalizing a process and a support component that has as its first and second concern the fair, just, economic and timely management of cases. It is simply a way of doing business.

"Case management is not a pilot project. It is not a buzzword or a fad. It is not a trick to transform judges from experienced, respected jurists into process managers. And, it most certainly is not a means to other ends. Case

management is, in fact, an end unto itself. It is preservation of the most important roles and functions of the judiciary. It is ensuring that the public's trust is protected. It is fulfilling the very reason that courts exist. To think of case management in other terms is to relinquish it to a lesser task.

"To make case management the order of business for all, many things must be done.

"Foremost is a clear articulation from the bench, bar and ministry leadership that case management is not a program or a project but is the regular order of business. To this end, case management must cease being a separate set of rules or procedures — it must instead be the rules of the court, the rules of civil procedure, the standards of judicial administration or the terms of reference.

"As long as the principles of case management are secondary to the daily routine of work, the efforts put towards case management will be extracurricular, excessive and burdensome. And, only a few will do it as they have been doing so far."

So it's important for us to recognize that the step that's being taken by putting case management masters into the Courts of Justice Act is a commitment on the part of this government to follow through with the process of court change that has now been going on for, really, the last 10 years and to take it the step further that it needs to go. It really behooves us all to recognize that and to give credit where credit is due.

There are some difficulties, it seems to me, with the way in which the bill suggests that this would be put into place, and those suggestions are ones that I really hope the Attorney General would be prepared to consider quite seriously, because I think the way in which the appointments process goes on and the way in which this piece of it has been introduced, without the context of the whole plan, is a bit of a problem.

First of all, to speak of the context, much of what is in the Civil Justice Review — and I would just remind the members of the Legislature that the Civil Justice Review was in and of itself a long and fairly arduous process that involved those engaged in the justice system over a fairly lengthy period of time, but many of the changes that are envisioned in the Civil Justice Review are not the subject of legislation but are a matter of routine and policy and procedure within the ministry.

One of the issues that comes about when we take a piece out of it, a piece that needs legislative authority, is that we may see it outside of the context of all of those other things. Now, if all these other things are being done and the kind of support that is necessary to make case management really work within the ministry is going on in the ministry, then this is a very good thing. If, on the other hand, this is the only piece of the work that is being done, it could be very dangerous and damaging. The reality is that we need to know from the Attorney General what the other pieces are, where they're at and how they mesh with this kind of legislative change before a real final judgement can be made.

I would suggest to the Attorney General that he listen to the recommendations within the Civil Justice Review about his responsibility, together with others in the justice

system, to ensure that there is clear information available to the public, to legislators when they are considering legislative amendments, to the general public using the courts and indeed to the profession of law itself. It is extraordinarily important that we know that these other pieces are in place in order to be sure that the changes in Bill 79 are going to work the way they ought to work in the whole general picture of things.

Let me read again from the Civil Justice Review, because the Civil Justice Review pointed out very clearly what their recommendations were around what they called "The Requirements for Effective Caseflow Management." The first point they make is that "The pilot projects in Ontario, then, have demonstrated that caseflow management works and that it is worth doing, provided that it is properly resourced." That comes back to the kinds of concerns that my colleagues in the Liberal Party were expressing. It does take resources to make a massive change in a system of this sort. Let me read what the implementation of caseflow management must be accompanied by, according to the Civil Justice Review:

"(a) the support and commitment of the bench, the bar and the ministry, to make it work;

"(b) the necessary technological systems, including computer hardware, computer software and communication networks, and including the training and staff support which are essential to make such technology effective;

"(c) the appropriate level and complement of staff support, including case management coordinators, scheduling staff, secretarial and file management staff;

"(d) a willingness on the part of the judiciary to take responsibility for managing the pace of litigation and to enforce the time parameters set down;

"(e) the appointment of judicial support officers to provide case management and judicial support;

"(f) a strategy to reduce the existing backlogs at the same time as the new system prevents future backlog;

"(g) the completion of an independent resource-needs analysis to determine the appropriate mix and quantities of the ingredients referred to above;

"(h) the articulation of clear goals and standards — both on a systems-wide basis and on the basis of monitoring the rules and time standards of individual cases — in order to provide benchmarks against which the effectiveness of the system can be measured;

"(i) the development of a detailed operational transition plan to phase in the introduction of case management on a province-wide scale over a reasonable period of time; and, finally,

"(j) the creation of an ongoing, periodic review mechanism in order to ensure that the caseflow management model continues to work as well as possible."

In other words, it's not enough for us to have legislation that creates case management masters if all of the supporting context is not there. That is not a matter of legislation, for the most part; that is a matter of ministerial decision-making and policymaking within the government. I would urge the minister to take the opportunity to speak to his bill in a way that the parliamentary assistant didn't, to explain this context and to give us clear assurance that the infrastructure that was envisioned to support case management is going to be in place.

In particular, it's important for the minister to tell us whether the resources will be there, because it is very clear that if this works well the savings will be enormous. That was clearly the vision in the Civil Justice Review and I believe very clearly the intention of the minister. But it is important to know that the dollars that are required up front to make the technological changes to ensure that the support staff who are envisioned in the team approach to case management, of whom the case management master is only one — the judge, the case management master, the case management coordinator, the file clerks, all of those people act as a team to move these cases through the courts. So it's important for us to know whether the case management master has a team or whether the case management master is envisioned as a miracle worker without that kind of support. It's really important to know that.

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It's also important to know what plans the minister has for evaluating the success of this system. It was very clear to us as we went through the pilot projects that the necessity of proving the value of case management was very real, and I don't believe that's changed today. I don't believe that three or four successful projects have convinced the bench and the legal profession, and certainly not the public, that this is the way to make the system work better.

We heard the scepticism from our colleagues in the official opposition. I don't think they're any different from the rest of the general population. It's going to be necessary for that measurement to happen and for us to be able to look at how massive and clear this change really will be. I think that having benchmarks is very important. We know there is a very low public opinion out there of the ability of the courts to really provide justice, so it is important as we go through this change to find the ways to show them that these changes are real.

One of the real concerns I have around the whole issue of the case management masters, however, is based on the way in which these people are going to be appointed. One of the major and, I would say, lasting and most impressive changes that the former Attorney General Ian Scott made in his term of office was to put in place an advisory committee to look at applications for the provincial bench, where the Attorney General has the power to recommend appointments, and to have that advisory committee representative of the public as well as of the judiciary and of the legal profession. It was extremely important because there was a general feeling out there, a feeling that we see expressed in our newspapers every day, that the people on the bench are not necessarily representative of the people who come before the bench. So it was extraordinarily important and a huge change in Ontario when former Attorney General Ian Scott put an advisory committee in place on a non-mandatory basis. In other words, they would receive advice, but in his scheme the Attorney General was still free to appoint outside of the recommendations of the advisory committee.

The advisory committee proved to be a very important mechanism to broaden the kind of representation that existed on the bench in Ontario. By the time we came

into office in 1990, there had already been a significant shift in the kind of people who were putting their names forward and the kind of appointments that were being made. There had been a change from pure political patronage, which very often appointments to the judiciary had been in the past, to at least some input in terms of competency, in terms of interest in wanting to be a judge, in terms of the general competence of these people.

It became very clear that while some who were applying to the bench found quite offensive that necessity for people to appear before and be interviewed by a committee of people composed of judges and of lawyers and of the general public, and some in traditional parties felt it did not give them the kind of power they wanted to see the bench reflect their values, in fact it succeeded in having us move forward with a bench based on ability, based on their willingness to do the kind of job that was required to be done in the current circumstances.

I think our experience was, and the experience continues to be, that we can all be very proud of the kinds of changes we've seen in our Ontario provincial bench. There is a willingness on the part of the judges in the provincial bench to recognize the changing times and the changing context within which they are forced to make their decisions. There is an understanding of the need to get up-to-date information about changes that have occurred in society, in demography, in values that impact on the kinds of decisions they are being asked to make in the courts. There is a willingness to take into account new legislation in a much more rapid way.

There was an outcry when we put in our Courts of Justice Act in 1993-94 around the requirement for the Chief Judge to make sure there was an educational component through the Judicial Council that was available to provincial judges. But the kind of use provincial judges have been making of that has been quite extraordinary, and they have become enthusiastic supporters, for the most part, of their need to get new information and see their work within the context of the general society as it is.

We see that the initial reluctance that was there has changed quite dramatically and we see that happening at other levels of the judiciary as well. The enthusiasm just a couple of weeks ago — the American Judges Association was here, and the level of the program was quite extraordinary and would give great confidence, it seems to me, to the people of the province that judges do not live in an ivory tower, that they are engaged in the current problems of the day and understand their role, understand that their authority in making decisions around cases is an extraordinary factor in terms of the kinds of changes that happen within society over time.

What is wrong with the current bill in front of us in terms of appointment is that it becomes a new patronage pool. Appointments are to be made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney General. There is no advisory council; there is no public input into the kinds of candidates that would be there.

It's important for us to understand that the Attorney General still has the authority to choose or not to choose, in the case of provincial judges, whether to go along with

a recommendation by the advisory committee. In fact, the advisory committee often presents several names, and the Attorney General is free to choose from among the names that come forward as being appropriate.

The Attorney General need not fear that by having an advisory council for the appointment of case management masters, that would curtail his authority to name who he felt was appropriate. It would simply mean that those people had gone through a process that indicated there had been some adjudication of their talents, of their ability to do that kind of work, not just whether they're affiliated with a particular point of view, particularly a political point of view.

It is important for people to understand that these people are being appointed — true, not for life, which was envisaged in the original civil justice report — for a period of seven years. Then it is up to the Chief Justice, based on their performance, whether they will be reappointed. They can be reappointed *ad infinitum*, until they are 65, for three-year periods at the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

It is extremely important for us to understand that these people will become in effect gatekeepers to the civil justice system in the province. They are the primary people who will determine what issues need to go on to adjudication and what issues are resolved. They will be doing the pre-trial work. They will be doing a lot of the work that moves those cases along, and in many cases their work will involve trying to get a resolution to a dispute long before it goes to trial.

1650

It is important for us to understand that these people will be very important in terms of ensuring that this system goes forward. I'm sure the minister will say that he wants to be sure, and that he believes any Attorney General would want to be sure, that the person is capable of doing the job. I'm sure that's the case, but that isn't the same objective as an advisory committee looking at those kinds of applications. I would say to you that public input into this process is essential. We now have public input into the process of appointing justices of the peace. We now have public input into the appointment of judges in this province. Even the federal government, which of course stopped short of having the minister have to accept recommendations from an advisory council, at least has improved its advisory system around the appointment of federal justices.

I know the Attorney General is going to say, as he does in the compendium, that what is happening is that we are going to appoint these people the way we appoint deputy judges, and if it was okay to appoint deputy judges under our government, why isn't it okay to do it here? There's quite a difference. Deputy judges are appointed on the recommendation of judges — regional judges and the Chief Justice — that is true, but they are *per diem* deputy judges. They have a very limited scope of practice. They are simply applying the rules of the Small Claims Court, and they do so largely on a *pro bono* basis, if you like, because for many of them they are senior enough that the daily stipend they earn and the number of times they perform this task in no way really affect their overall income. They are quite different in the

sense that this is not a full-time job for them. It is not seen as being a lifetime job for them. It is a job that they do as a supportive job to the justice system as needs to be done. It is a job they do to gain some experience in adjudication and, I'm quite sure, in many cases to beef up their résumé when they send it to the federal justice minister. I don't think there's any question about that.

But the reality is that deputy judges are in a totally different position than these case management masters will be. We are talking about appointing people to very important full-time tasks that will go on for at least seven years, possibly for the rest of that person's career. The minister proposes to do that without any public input to the appointment process at all — quite contrary to the practice that has built up in Ontario over the last 10 years and, frankly, even the process that is beginning to happen at the federal level.

It is really not appropriate, it seems to me, for the minister to compare deputy judges and case management masters under these circumstances. We all want to be sure that these are the best possible people because they are going to be extraordinarily influential in terms of the way the court system works. I would ask that the minister consider amendments to put an advisory committee in place, to see this as part of the process through the rest of the justice system. Otherwise it will tarnish the ability of case management masters to be seen in the same light by the public, the legal profession and their fellow judicial officers, because they will not have been subjected to a similar kind of process.

It seems to me that this is particularly true because the bill also gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Attorney General, as we know these things go, the right to set the number of case management masters who are going to exist, to set the qualifications for those case management masters, to outline a code of conduct — the Chief Justice gets to outline a code of conduct for these people — all without any public input, which is not the case for any of the other levels of the judiciary; not the case, for example, for deputy judges, for whom there is a council which must recommend and deal with issues such as conduct of deputy judges. There is a council that recommends the qualifications required and the kinds of criteria that need to be used.

The minister would be well advised to look at the importance of having that kind of council there, because accountability for judicial officers is one of the major issues the public raises around its lack of confidence in the ability of our system to deliver justice. The fact that there is public input to the whole issues of appointment and determining codes of conduct and so on is extremely important. I would urge that the minister respond to the very clear requests in the Civil Justice Review to continue to involve the public more fully in these processes, because the Civil Justice Review committee was very clear that this is one of the things that made its process so important and gave it the credibility with the public that it required. It is a challenge to any jurisdiction these days to have some public commitment to the way in which our courts operate.

It is extremely important for us to understand that in many cases people coming to the courts with a dispute will never see another judicial officer other than this case management master. This will be the face of justice for large numbers of people who come before the system. So it is important that they have the same kind of process for their appointment and that we can be sure they have the confidence of the public. That is a very important aspect. I tell the minister now that it is really important for him to consider that.

Similarly, it is interesting to me that there is no provision within this act, as there is for judges and for deputy judges and for justices of the peace, around accommodation of disability, around what you do when one of these people becomes disabled in the middle of his or her work. That was a very important change that happened in the Courts of Justice Act the last time around, because there was no provision for us in terms of that. It's important for the minister to consider that an amendment to add in some provision around disability accommodation is probably wise, because we all know that when you have an appointment, in this case for seven years, many things can happen to us in seven years. So it is important for the minister to have some way of dealing with accommodating to that disability that doesn't involve disciplinary practice. Right now, someone could be removed as part of the disciplinary practice with the court, but they would not be accommodated. That's an issue that the minister ought to look at.

It's really important as well for us to understand that in the disciplinary process the Chief Justice has all of the same recourses as he has in terms of any of the other complaint processes. It's important and it's a good policy that there is a range of action that the Chief Justice can take when there's a complaint that is found to have grounds. That part is very important. But the reality is that in the case of case management masters, unlike the case of deputy judges, there is no council provided for in this legislation. It is important, both in terms of due process and in terms of public confidence around accountability that that provision be there.

1700

The minister may think he can set up a quasi-judicial layer within the system without having these safeguards. I think he is mistaken to do so. I think it is a big mistake to do so, especially at a time when gradually, with the whole input of the public, with the more open accountability of the judicial system, there is at least a sense that the system is not closed, in fact a sense on the part of the public that they have a role to play in terms of accountability. I would urge that the minister consider that.

I would also urge that the minister consider what kind of response he is undoubtedly going to get to the suggestion that the remuneration for case management masters will simply be set by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The remuneration of judges is set by a special commission looking at all the factors, looking at what happens in other provinces and all that sort of peripheral information that really is necessary in order to maintain the status of our court and the excellence of our court. It's important that the public be clear that there is a mechanism for the setting of salaries in the case of these people. They're

clearly envisioned to be there for a length of time that also has some rationale behind it.

My friends in the Liberal Party are very concerned about the cost of this system, but they didn't talk about the cost of another whole layer because we don't know what the cost of that would be. The minister has yet to tell us how many case management masters there might be or what the salary might be for those case management masters. Are they going to earn more than our judges, who currently earn \$124,000 plus a bit per year? If they're not going to earn that much, what are their qualifications going to be?

The recommendation from the Civil Justice Review was that they have a minimum of 10 years before the bar, either here in the province or here in the province and in other jurisdictions. But the minister in this act clearly says that there will be a combination of things and that that'll all be done by the Lieutenant Governor in Council through regulation. That means there's no input into what those qualifications are going to be and there is no base. At least with provincial judges you know that they have practised law, they have been called to the bar, for 10 years before they are appointed. That's a minimum.

It seems to me that the minister has a duty to give at least a minimum kind of qualification in here. With the way it's left open and the fact that all the appointments are left up to him, the suggestion of the member for Wellington to the member for St Catharines that maybe he was looking for an appointment as a case management master is not as absurd as it might have been. I would just say to the minister that it's important to put minimal qualifications in here and to be sure that we are talking about people who are familiar with the law, who have practised the law, who will be able to perform the quasi-judicial functions envisaged in this piece of legislation.

I think the minister will find he has lots of support if he is willing to make some of those changes, because it is very important for us to have real confidence that the people who are going to be doing this very important work have been appointed in a process that ensures accountability.

As we go through the rest of the act, there are a lot of changes that are consequent to some of the changes that have already been made and some that are consequent to changes that were made in the last amendments to this act. Most of them are simply adding into all of those sections the case management master as a layer within the system. That's quite appropriate because it is very important for us to be sure that the authority is clearly there. One of the ways in which we find the courts often disrupted is if there is any way for an attorney who is in dispute to dispute the qualification of the person judging the case. So it is extremely important — it might be quite tedious to some members of the House — that there are so many consequent changes, simply adding in case management masters to various pieces of the Courts of Justice Act. But it is really important that those pieces be done.

One of the other issues that was not mentioned by my colleagues in the official opposition is the issue of the lengthening of the term of office for the Chief Judge of the Provincial Division. When the Courts of Justice Act

was put into place the Chief Judge was to be appointed for six years, then there was a year of transition if a new Chief Judge had not been named.

It's important that we have a rationale from the minister as to why he is extending in this piece of legislation the length of term for the Chief Judge to eight years, plus one further year if a successor is not appointed. I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that one of the areas the current minister praised in our Courts of Justice Act was that we had limited the terms of the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court and the regional senior judges. I remember quite an eloquent speech on his behalf about how important it was that the same person not be exercising the extraordinary power that pertains to the Chief Judge or to regional senior judges over too long a period of time, particularly when there is a real effort to get transition within the court and to get the courts moving.

The minister, when he was in opposition, talked about barriers to change often being the people who were in place in certain positions of authority. I don't think that's changed very much and, with no disrespect at all to current office holders or to anyone who might hold the office in the future, I am curious why the minister would have changed his mind and extended the term of the Chief Justice for an additional two to three years. I know that certainly would be a recommendation from the Chief Judge, and that the recommendation, as I recall the rationale that was given to me, was that it would permit the Chief Judge to oversee a greater array of changes within the court over a longer period of time, thus entrenching those changes.

But I see some real danger in extending that period of time for those judges. I think it is important that we have some turnover, that we have some change in the system, that those judges who are practising as regional senior judges have some sense that they may have an opportunity to serve their province as Chief Judge in a more timely fashion. I think that extending the term is not necessary and is quite a puzzling aspect of this bill.

Another section of the bill, subsection 67(2) of the Courts of Justice Act, concerns the Family Rules Committee of the civil justice courts. It's very interesting that the minister has chosen to expand the Family Rules Committee by having the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court be able to add two lawyers at his or, some day, her recommendation to the family rules but did not follow the clear recommendation that came out of the Civil Justice Review that there be members of the public on that Family Rules Committee.

I repeat what I said before: When the Civil Justice Review committee toured around this province, one of the clear things they were hearing from the people of Ontario was that laypeople have a role in the administration of justice in this province and that they ought to have some say, some representation on these committees that determine the very way in which the law will work for the public. The minister is allowing the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court to appoint yet two more lawyers to this committee but is not taking the recommendation that the Civil Justice Review had of adding public representation on the family rules committee. I urge the minister to

amend this act to do that. It would be a very important gesture on his part to the input of the public who, if they become engaged in the actual delivery of justice services in the province, I believe will be less critical of the best efforts of the judiciary, the legal profession and the ministry to deliver those services.

1710

I suppose I shouldn't be too surprised, because another element in this bill is the removal of the requirement that the regional courts administration committees, which include the public, must meet at least four times a year. When the parliamentary assistant introduced the bill, he said this would give flexibility to the community. We know what this government means when they talk about flexibility. It means their flexibility, not the flexibility of public input.

The reality is that one of the very few places the public have official input into the court system is through the regional administration committees that were envisaged by the changes in the Courts of Justice Act brought forward by the Liberals but were put into place by our government. It was a very difficult process getting those courts administration committees to actually operate — to meet and to be functional and to report to one another about what they were doing.

It is important for the minister to recognize that more, rather than less, public input was envisaged by the process of having the Civil Justice Review. It is important for the minister to recognize that both the judicial and the legal profession members of that committee became convinced over time that if there is public representation and a public stake in the way the courts run, there will indeed be more public confidence in the delivery of justice.

I urge that the minister withdraw that because I can tell him there is still enough resistance on the bench and among the legal profession to having the public involved in courts administration management. It is to his benefit, to the benefit of the ministry, to have what I know will be the support of the public on those cases. His whole challenge is to get this system moving, and moving appropriately, administered appropriately. His best allies in doing that are the members of the public who understand how the administration of the courts is not working and could work better.

I would urge him to revisit that whole issue, because if the requirement that the courts administration committees meet at least four times a year disappears, they simply will not meet. That will make it harder for this minister to accomplish the enormous change he is trying to accomplish through this act and the other various measures he is undertaking.

It is important for all of us to recognize that there is not an effort in this bill to do a lot of the things that we still need to see happen in the justice system. My colleagues in the Liberal Party were quite right to talk about the ongoing problems that there are within the criminal system around the timely movement of cases and what that means to the confidence of the public in the administration of justice. They are quite right that this is a problem. It is separate from this act, but it is a problem. I would urge the minister to provide for the public the

kind of information they need to see why this change in the civil justice side of the system is likely to help in the criminal justice side of the system.

We are talking about the same justices who work in both sides of the system. We are talking about an appeal process that may be civil or criminal. Although some justices specialize in one side or the other, the reality is that the backup in the system affects both sides of the system. If the minister is successful through these measures and what I trust are the other measures needed, the twinning measures in an administrative sense that are needed in order to carry this through, it will have a positive effect on the criminal side of the system. It's important for him to understand that he must demonstrate that to the members of this House and to the public if he is to regain some confidence in his ability to make the changes that are happening.

There are a number of changes in the act that are to other bills, and they follow along on the kinds of changes that the minister is making. Perhaps the most significant one is the change in the Charities Accounting Act amendments. There is no question that many of the members of this House have, as I have, sat on volunteer boards of directors of charitable organizations in our communities and know how irksome the process has been around some of the changes that, as time goes on, those charitable boards know should be made for the protection of their organizations and indeed for their own protection from liability. So it is good that this process under the Charities Accounting Act is being streamlined along the lines that have been suggested by the public guardian and trustee.

That is another whole area of administrative law where enormous changes have been made and more still need to be made. This is a positive change in that those changes can now happen without those small charitable organizations having to go through the kind of approach to the court that was necessary in the past. So it's a good change. I hope it is understood by the charities and I hope we will find a way to help all of those volunteers that the government is hoping to get engaged in the delivery of services understand that it is a positive position to be in in terms of being a director of a charitable organization under those circumstances.

It is also important, I think, to mention the Construction Lien Act. One of the most important areas of change that we were working through in our government and that I see now being carried through in terms of the changes here is to find some way to deal with the process around construction lien problems. They are very real problems because they involve the very livelihood of many tradespeople and many developers. It is extraordinarily important that the work we did during our term of government to get those two sides together to suggest a process to resolve disputes in a more timely fashion is being carried through by the current government.

I think there will be great relief that much of the progress that has been made in dealing with this very thorny, very detailed area of law is being resolved by the minister. The minister, when he was in opposition, was very eloquent about the problems faced by people in the construction lien area and the need for a more effective

quasi-judicial role to resolve those things and to build the expertise around the very complex issues that are involved in many of those cases. He is now adding the case management master as one of the officials who can deal with the issues that come up in construction lien, and that is a very positive aspect.

In terms of the rest of the act, it largely talks about these names of the court. It's important for us to know that the bill itself is already to be amended. The minister has given us amendments to date calling the first level the Court of Ontario rather than the Trial Court of Ontario. I think that answers some of the concerns that had been raised around too much detail, and possibly confusing detail, in the new naming of the courts. I won't go into any great detail about that whole issue of renaming the courts except to say that anything that makes it possible for these massive changes in process to go through in a smooth manner is very important.

1720

The changes that are there in section 50 of the act around complaints against judges are a very good cleanup of some of the issues that arose as a result of the last changes to the Courts of Justice Act. It makes provision for cases where the complaint is against the Chief Justice or against a regional senior justice. That was a very important criticism of the changes that were made last time. Justices who were not in that situation felt there wasn't provision if in fact such a complaint came up. Of course, we're very much aware over the last couple of years that complaints against judges do happen and that it is very important to have a process to deal with those complaints that the public can have real confidence in. None of the other changes are anything except house-keeping, as I see them. As I read them, they all are enshrining the kinds of major changes the minister has put forward.

In closing my comments, I'd like to again make a plea to the minister that it is really essential, if people are to understand how important these changes are, that the context be provided, and in a way that ensures the concomitant administrative changes actually are being carried through. It is easy enough for people to dismiss this as an act that caters to the sensitivities of particular judges or justices and as simply a renaming of the courts. It is important that we do our part to try to help people understand that it is a great deal more than that, that its impact will be much greater than that and that our time spent on this act is worthwhile. This is not a small little housekeeping issue of an act; this is an act that has substantial impact.

As we go through the period of discussion, I will be looking for the minister, through whatever speakers he puts up on this bill, to give some of those contextual comments, to give the kind of assurance people need that care is being taken to make sure this act actually has the effect that he envisages it will and that I certainly hope it will.

I also hope that as we go on, we will see this minister coming forward with some of the other big changes that are necessary to resolve some of those issues that were mentioned by my colleagues in the official opposition and that we certainly have seen mentioned by prominent

jurists over the last couple of years. It's important that those concerns that have been raised are dealt with. It's important that we deal with the technological change that's necessary and that we explain to people very clearly what that technological change is.

I know that not very long ago I was speaking with a lawyer in a rural part of the province who continued to be really quite agitated around the electronic filing of things. There are many people out there who haven't been trained on computers. This will not work if we don't get electronic filing and that sort of thing done. It's not possible to make these changes unless we find a way to get people on board at all levels. That will mean creating for people a sense of competency around the new technologies that work.

Right now, given the kinds of problems many lawyers are facing in their professions around legal aid funding, which certainly is creating difficulties for them, possibly in terms of the numbers of lawyers that are around and the kind of competition that is there, and certainly in terms of the liability insurance, it is hard for many lawyers to look at the additional cost of equipping themselves and their offices to deal appropriately with the new technological age.

It's important for us to have computers in schools; it's very important for us to have computers in the courts as well. It is a very backward area. It is one area where, frankly, government has fallen far behind the private sector in terms of the way we have adapted to technology. We have not provided our judges with laptops, for example. They are still using longhand. Even for those who are able and willing to be computerized, very often there is a resource problem for them in terms of that.

I'd say to the minister that overall we'll be supporting this bill. We will have some amendments, particularly around the public input aspects, and I hope he will consider those seriously. We will want to be supportive of the kinds of changes that need to go along with these kinds of legislative changes to make our courts more efficient and more effective and certainly more meeting the needs of the public as they bring them to them. We'll be looking forward, as the debate goes on and as we look at amendments, to seeing a real commitment on the part of the government to make this new change really work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Questions or comments?

Hon Mr Harnick: My congratulations to the member for London Centre for a very thoughtful speech, quite simply because she has realized very astutely that the key aspect of this bill is to begin the implementation of the Civil Justice Review, something that I think, as the Attorney General, the member for London Centre deserves a lot of credit for initiating. Quite simply, the cost of litigation, the speed with which private disputes are resolved — their cost is far too high. The Civil Justice Review started to develop a procedure to answer the problems that litigants were having when they went to court.

We are committed — I as minister am very committed — to the implementation of the Civil Justice Review. I'm committed to the appointment of case management masters. I'm committed to the development

of case management. We will have this fall 100% case management in Ottawa, and I hope within less than a year at least 50% case management in Metropolitan Toronto.

As the member very astutely points out, technology is a very, very major component. We are now looking to the private sector to provide us with private sector efficiencies and, in providing private sector efficiencies, providing us with the technology that will save us huge amounts of money, as the member referred to, and at the same time provide us with the technology to take the Ministry of the Attorney General from the 19th to the 21st century.

I congratulate the member on her presentation and thank her for her thoughtful comments.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): In commenting on the speech by the member for London Centre, as I've looked through this bill and listened intently to the comments, I can't help but think about a situation in my own constituency that I don't think this bill really addresses.

As the Attorney General, who is also responsible for native issues in this province, would know, we have had the "Operation Rainbow" case going for some time. This court case has been dragging on for well over six years and has cost the government and the first nations literally hundreds of thousands of dollars. I fully recognize that the Attorney General has no ability to move this along, but I can tell him that as the minister responsible for native affairs, he should be talking to his colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, because this case is really about resource allocation. The government should be making a meaningful attempt with those first nations to resolve this issue, and then we wouldn't have it clogging up our courts, costing us hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I have met with those people in the first nations who are very concerned with this issue as well as, and the minister would know this, the Manitoulin Municipal Association, whose leadership and membership have all called on the Minister of Natural Resources to open up meaningful negotiations surrounding the resource allocation issue. I would suggest to the minister that if his colleague the Minister of Natural Resources would get out there and begin these negotiations, we wouldn't have this case in front of the courts this very day. It's been six or seven years that this has dragged on; since, I believe, about 1989. It's time for a resolution. This is an example of where courts do a very bad job of resolving the important issues of the day.

1730

Mr Bisson: I want to congratulate my colleague the member for London Centre, who spoke at length on this particular bill and I think brought forward a number of points of view in regard to the bill in a very thoughtful and very thorough manner, as is indicative of this member. I've noticed in the House for the past number of years that she's been here that every time she takes the opportunity to debate a bill, she's normally on target, on issue and has done her homework. I want to congratulate her.

I just want to echo one of the comments the member for London Centre has made to the Attorney General. I too, like the member for London Centre, am somewhat concerned about the process you're going to go through to hire the case management masters. It seems to me that there has been a good process that was set up by the former government, the NDP government, under the appointments of the justices of the peace. There is a fairly public process there where people have an opportunity in their communities to have input about who those people will be. After all, they are basically the ones who will have in their hands the control of those particular cases. I would echo, as the member for London Centre did, that the Attorney General and his government should really take a look at the question about how we appoint the case management masters; at least take a look at that.

As is the member for London Centre, I'm generally supportive of what the government is doing in this particular piece of legislation. I think it's incumbent upon opposition members as well as government members, at times when we agree on particular issues, to give that support and to indicate so publicly. In this particular case I think there are a number of points raised in this legislation that make some sense, things that need to be done. I would argue that probably some of those things we would have done ourselves if we had been given the opportunity on June 8, 1995, to be returned as government.

I want to congratulate the Attorney General on at least moving forward with some of those initiatives. At times in this House we are somewhat partisan, but there are days, like today, when we can agree on some matters on behalf of the people of this province, the people we are sent here to represent. Again, I would like to congratulate the member for London Centre.

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): I'd like to make some comments regarding underfunding of crown attorneys. The truth of the matter is that they're the highest-paid in the country. Before I ran, I made over \$100,000 a year personally. When the NDP government lost the election and our government won, the NDP cabinet ministers and myself suffered the same fate: We both took dramatic pay cuts. I say to my rich friends in the NDP, I share your pain in having to scale back your lifestyle. I share that pain.

I'd like to talk about how it happened. For those of you who are interested, how did I make \$100,000 a year? If you go back 10 years to 1985, when the Honourable Roy McMurtry was the Attorney General, I made \$35,000 a year and crown attorneys were among the lowest-paid in the country. Thanks to the generosity of the next 10 years of NDP and Liberal governments, I went from \$35,000 a year to \$100,000 a year.

So I would like to say to the members of the opposition that I thank you, that my children thank you, my ex-wife thanks you, her lawyers thank you. It's no coincidence, I would suggest, that during that 10 years, while my salary tripled, so did the Ontario government debt.

To conclude then, if I'm ever back in the crown attorney's office and if the opposition are ever back in power, I look forward to your continuing generosity, but

I doubt that the public will look forward to it in a similar fashion.

The Acting Speaker: The member for London Centre, you have two minutes to reply.

Mrs Boyd: I'd like to thank the Attorney General for his comments, and also my colleagues in the other parties. I won't make any comment on the member for Wentworth North. I think he made that very clear all on his own.

I would say just in response to my colleague from Willowdale that I do believe that the course of change needs to build, but it is important for him to recognize that a lot of the resistance is still there within the system, and it is going to be important for all of us in this place to be supportive of measures while at the same time being mindful of the need for appropriate resourcing for those changes.

The minister needs to understand that on this side of the House we will be watching very closely around the resource issues, because we know he's been required, as every other ministry has been, to drop his expenditures. Approximately \$14 million is out of his budget, and it's going to be hard for him to make the changes he wants to make in an appropriate way unless he has the resources.

It will take time to get the resources out of the system: As the inefficiencies disappear the resources will be there. I would just caution the minister not to make the same mistake that some in previous governments have made, assuming that those costs are going to come out faster than they do. It is a system that moves slowly and it does need some upfront money in order to make this change really work.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John L. Parker (York East): It is my pleasure to rise and add my remarks to today's discussion of Bill 79, An Act to improve Ontario's court system, to respond to concerns raised by charities and their volunteers and to improve various statutes relating to the administrative of justice. It's somewhat daunting to rise after listening to the remarks of my friend and colleague the honourable member from Wentworth North, with his poignant remarks on this bill.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): He just admitted he was responsible for the provincial debt.

Mr Parker: My friend opposite is telling me that my friend from Wentworth North took personal responsibility for the provincial debt. No. What I heard was my friend from Wentworth North thanking the previous NDP government for going into debt to finance his bank account. I wasn't aware that crown attorneys were so highly valued in this province. They obviously got a few pay increases when I wasn't paying attention. I'm going to have to pay them a little more respect than I have in the past. My high regard for the honourable member for Wentworth North of course has always been at least equal to my respect for any of my co-counsel, and I'm pleased to see that my friends opposite share that high regard for him.

Speaking "cleanup," as it were, on this bill, I will keep my remarks short. I will alert the other side that it's not my intention to speak out the clock. I'm told that the ball

is to be passed over to the other side before we reach 6 o'clock. I will make a few remarks at this stage, I will keep them germane to the bill, and then it's my intention that I will sit down and allow the opposition one more kick at the can before the day ends.

I might begin by reflecting on what we have heard so far in the course of this afternoon's discussion and lend my sincere compliments to my friend from London Centre for her remarks, which I thought were very apropos and were very well focused on the content of the bill itself. It was very gratifying to hear such approving words from the other side on this bill and a recognition of the important improvements this bill makes to our justice system.

I'm afraid I can't be as complimentary in respect to the remarks we heard from the official opposition. I found that they tended to avoid the content of the bill itself and rambled on at some length on matters quite peripheral or not at all connected with the bill. I heard the usual litany of diatribes about the legal aid system and other rants about the state of the justice system in this province, none of which are the subject of this bill and none of which fall within the scope of this bill.

But it was instructive to hear that when the third party spoke to the content of this bill, the comments were, by and large, supportive and complimentary. It was quite some time into the remarks of my friend from London Centre that she found a few nits to pick with some of the details to be found buried in the content of the bill. Perhaps, if some of us gave it that much time, we would find room for reasonable people to differ on some of the fine points of the bill: whether a particular judicial officer should be appointed for this many years or that many years. But this is the stuff about which any group of people can come to differences of opinion and have different reasons for preferring one approach or one term over another approach or another term.

1740

But generally speaking and substantially speaking, the comments opposite were very supportive of this bill, and those comments were most welcome. In particular I want to compliment the member for confining her remarks to the substance of the bill. That's what I found most encouraging and most pleasant, that the comments were focused on the bill itself and didn't indulge in a general rant on subjects having nothing to do with the bill, which is, I'm afraid, something we've grown accustomed to and something we were treated to a little earlier from my honourable friend who's running for the leadership of her party. I wish her well in that quest. I think she's ably suited to the task of leading the Liberal Party and leading the official opposition in this province. If today's performance is anything to go by, I think she will do well as Leader of the Opposition in this House.

In the time available to me, I might just review the content of the bill and remind those present of the subject matter of the bill. I'm pleased that the third party doesn't need this reminder, but perhaps the official opposition would do well to be reminded of the content of this bill, about what it does and what it's about and, by inference, what it doesn't do and what it isn't about and what really isn't relevant to the debate today.

This bill is a modest bill. It's not particularly glamorous. It's 21 pages. It has 11 sections to it, if my count is anything to go by. Really, what this bill is all about at the end of the day is doing better for less. I'm pleased to receive the recognition from my friends opposite that it is possible to achieve savings in the current system and it is possible that those savings can be achieved in the context of doing a better job of delivering the product.

Mr Speaker, I'm very pleased to see you back in the seat. Congratulations on your recent approval and best of luck to you in your new duties.

This government is all about doing better for less. This bill is a good example of how that can be achieved. Just as adding costs to a system and adding expenditures to a system don't necessarily make the system better and don't necessarily do a better job of delivering the product, so removing costs from the system and removing expenses from the system don't necessarily do a worse job of delivering the product or doing what is required to be done.

This bill improves the system, improves the delivery of the product, and it does so in a way which removes some of the costs from the system, removes the costs from the taxpayer and removes the costs from the participants in the judicial system, the parties to the judicial process.

There are four basic elements to the bill. First of all, it amends the Courts of Justice Act to provide for the appointment of case management masters and make certain consequential amendments to other acts that arise out of that appointment. That is a very key element of the bill and is a very important part of streamlining the judicial system, reducing costs and getting to the result more quickly, more efficiently, at less cost to everyone involved and with less aggravation, quite frankly, to everyone involved.

It also amends the Courts of Justice Act to change the names of Ontario's courts. Right now, the courts in Ontario have names that were recently applied to them that no one has really grown accustomed to and that have no basis in the traditions of our system or the system in use anywhere in the common-law world. The amendments in this act restore names that are rooted in the traditions of our system, have some meaning within the traditions of our system and have the support of those who are involved in the system — the judiciary and the legal profession who work with this system every day.

The bill also changes the regulation-making power in the Charities Accounting Act, essentially taking the authority from the Lieutenant Governor in Council and transferring it to the Attorney General on the recommendation of the public guardian and trustee. What's that all about? What's that's about, Mr Speaker, and I know you're paying close attention to this, is streamlining elements of our management and administration of charities in a way that will encourage volunteerism, will make it easier for charities to get on with the job they're there to do, make it more attractive for volunteers to serve on boards of directors, make it more straightforward for charities to subscribe for insurance to protect their directors, and generally get more people involved in the system and make it easier for them to apply their volunteer efforts to the ends of the charitable causes

rather than getting bogged down in the bureaucracy of administering the charitable system.

The fourth aspect of the bill is to include a host of other consequential changes that flow out of the first three, essentially changing definitions, inserting the concept of the case management master in the various elements of the judicial system here and there throughout the entire system.

So there are three substantive provisions in this bill amending the Courts of Justice Act to allow for the appointment of case management masters, changing the names of the courts in this province to bring the names into compliance or into line with the names that are traditional to our system and to the common-law world, and changing the regulation-making power in the Charities Accounting Act to streamline our charitable system to make it more straightforward for the volunteer participants in our charities to get on with the job of doing the work of the charities and to be less involved and less bogged down in the bureaucracy of dealing with the fine points of accountability in the act and racing off to court every time they want to do something, which by now has become routine. The fourth aspect of the bill is simply consequential amendments to other acts that arise out of the other provisions.

This is a bill that is about doing better for less, it's a bill that is about removing costs from the system and it's a bill that is about focusing everyone's energies on achieving the desired results.

Just a reflection on the role of the case management master and then maybe I'll wrap up my remarks at that point. When people get involved in the litigation process, usually they don't want to be there. Usually they are in this process because all other alternatives have proven unsuccessful, there is a difference of opinion and it's got to be resolved ultimately. That's what brings them to court. It is a tragedy when the court system itself becomes the subject of further disputes and further costs and further aggravation. What we have all too often seen is a court system that itself generates further frictions, further difficulties, further points of dispute and inevitably further costs. It generates costs to the taxpayer and it generates costs to the participants — to the plaintiffs, to the defendants and to everybody else involved in the system.

It is desirable for everyone concerned to get to a resolution of the matter in dispute as effectively and as efficiently and as fairly as possible. By the appointment of case management masters to focus the efforts of the people involved towards arriving at the resolution of the major point in dispute, this bill will have the effect of bringing matters to a head more quickly, more cleanly, getting the procedural matters out of the way and certainly out of the hands of judges, where they don't have to waste their time handling these things. The masters are perfectly effective, and in my experience they have been supreme at being able to get at the heart of the procedural matters and getting them off the table so the parties can concentrate on the substantive matters in dispute. That's what this bill restores. That's what this bill allows and promotes. The effect, at the end of the day, and it bears repeating, is to reduce the cost to the taxpayer. It reduces

the time consumed in the litigation process, it reduces the costs of the litigation process and it gets problems resolved more quickly.

1750

Mr Speaker, it is with some pride that I speak in favour of this bill this afternoon. I am pleased, with those remarks, to again extend my best regards to you in your new role. With that, I'm pleased to sit down and turn the matter over to my friends.

The Speaker: Questions or comments?

Ms Castrilli: I can't resist thanking the member for York East for his complimentary comments in one regard, but I must say I wondered if he really listened to what I had to say with respect to the substance of the bill.

I certainly found agreement in the bill with respect to simplification of the rules affecting charities. I certainly thought it was worthwhile to see what the effectiveness would be of the case managers.

There's going to be a change to the name of the courts. You say it will reduce costs. I'm not convinced it will reduce costs. I think there are things built into this bill which will not make it very easy to support that contention.

The difficulty with the bill is that its title leads you to believe there's going to be a reform of the system. Therefore, my comments were indicating that there is still a great deal to do, a great way to go. We here in the opposition want to be very sure the government understands that there is a whole list of things that need to be done and that we'll be monitoring, we'll be watching, we'll be suggesting, as we must do in the public interest, in the interest of the people of Ontario.

It was not intended to be a rant; it was intended to be a very constructive basket of suggestions for the government to heed and to follow. We hope that they take our advice.

Mr Wildman: I am not one learned in the law and have not had the opportunity to serve in any particular capacity in this House that would lead me to be particularly knowledgeable about the subject matter before us, but I am an aficionado of Rumpole of the Bailey. I must say that in listening to the member for York East I felt a bit like Rumpole when he appears before, sometimes, a younger member of the bench and is lectured by the member of the judiciary, the judge, on some matter, and Rumpole seems completely nonplussed and perplexed about what is going on. He's always trying to figure out what is really in the mind of the judge and what has bothered him to lead him to do this, because what Rumpole is really interested in is, by hook or by crook, ensuring that he gets his way.

To have compliments showered on my friend the member for London Centre by the member for York East gave me pause. I think that her presentation was very, very good and thorough, and it was helpful to me as someone who is not particularly experienced in these matters despite the fact that I have had the opportunity on occasion to debate bills and legislation related to the courts. I was a little bit taken aback, though, that in the midst of his praise for the member for London Centre's presentation, the member for York East accused her of being a nit-picker. What real praise is there in calling a member —

The Speaker: Thank you. Questions or comments?

Mr Tilson: The member for York East I believe covered one of the major areas of this bill which I think we all need to look at. The whole legal system in this province hasn't been working. It's become too costly. It's too lengthy. We're looking at alternative dispute resolution. We're looking at mediation. We're looking at a number of things. There's been a problem with family law cases taking too long, in particular the need for possible mediation in that area. With respect to legal aid, that has become unbelievably costly, and we have been overwhelmed by that. So we've had to look at new things.

The member for London Centre has obviously had some experience in her former capacity as Attorney General, particularly in the area of case management, and has made some comments in her speech, as did the member for York East. That's an area that has been proven in other jurisdictions, has been proven in test cases in this province that I believe will be a success in this province.

Case management masters, as we've indicated in the past, will support judges in motions. They will preside at pre-trials; they will preside at settlement conferences and controlling time lines of cases. All the issues we've looked at — cost, time, administration of the judicial process, administration of the court process — in this system of case management masters and case management I believe will be the success this province cries out for.

Case management certainly requires an early determination of essential issues. I believe that was one of the major crutches of the member for York East in supporting this bill.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Responses?

Mr Parker: I began my remarks with the expression of my intention not to speak out the clock. It looks as though I actually did that, but I'll respond briefly to the remarks that have just been made.

First in response to my friend from Downsview, there was some doubt expressed as to whether the court name change could be carried out without incurring new costs. I think that point was addressed quite ably by my friend from Dufferin-Peel earlier today. As far as the cost of changing letterheads is concerned, that's going to be phased in over about a one-year period. Letterheads are normally reordered over the course of that sort of period. They just have to change the name on the letterhead next time it's ordered within that one-year period, not a really big cost item. If that's going to be the main hook on which to hang your argument against this bill, that's a pretty insubstantial hook, I would suggest.

My friend from Dufferin-Peel also noted that the sign in front of the courthouse isn't likely to change. Right now it typically says "courthouse." It will continue to say "courthouse" — not much of a cost involved in changing that.

My friend from Downsview suggested that this bill doesn't do everything that might be done to improve our justice system. I'll grant her that. We can't do everything in one day. On the one hand the opposition tells us that we're moving too quickly; today we're being told that we're moving too slowly. I guess that's the way it is with the opposition. If you don't like the position they take,

that's okay; they'll take another one. They've got several opinions on any matter that you want to raise. I'm not surprised that they're telling us to move faster and slower at the same time.

I always enjoy hearing from my friend from Algoma. He's perplexed that I speak in complimentary terms in respect of my friend from London Centre. I don't think I have ever spoken of the member for London Centre in anything other than complimentary terms. He called her a nitpicker, I didn't.

Mr Wildman: No, you called her a nitpicker.

Mr Parker: I said she found nits to pick. My friend from Algoma therefore says I called her a nitpicker.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'm happy to move the adjournment of second reading debate on Bill 79.

The Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
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Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

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Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
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Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
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Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	PC	
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Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)
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Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

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Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
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Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
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Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels

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Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
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Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
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Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation

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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 8 October 1996

Mardi 8 octobre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 octobre 1996

*The House met at 1332.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MANITOULIN FERRY SERVICE

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Mr Speaker, this is my first opportunity to congratulate you on your new position.

The people of Ontario should know that the Chi-Cheemaun ferry service from Tobermory to South Baymouth is non-existent at present. Last week the Chi-Cheemaun experienced mechanical difficulties and will be out of commission for the season.

Manitoulin Island and the Bruce Peninsula will be and are experiencing severe economic repercussions as a result of this disruption of service. The loss of tourism dollars to businesses on Manitoulin and Tobermory will be significant. I'm told already of premature closings of some businesses as a result of the lack of ferry service.

In addition, people from the North Shore and Manitoulin, people from southern Ontario and university and college students who want to return home for the Thanksgiving weekend with family and friends will be greatly inconvenienced.

It is time that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines takes responsibility for this important transportation and tourism link. It is time that he put the Nindawayma back in service so that the Chi-Cheemaun has a backup. It is time this government behaved responsibly with regard to the people of Manitoulin and the Bruce Peninsula and made a commitment to northern transportation.

We can only be thankful that this breakdown did not occur in July.

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Every day that we wake up now we hear of another instance of this government not wanting to listen to or hear from the people of this province, not being interested at all in some of the traditions of this democratic place as it brings forth its agenda to reduce health care, reduce education and do all kinds of other mean-spirited things to the people of this province.

Every day since they took power there's been example after example of legislation coming through this place where there has been no desire to go out to the public for their input or to consult or hear what people had to say, nor the presentation of an impact study.

This morning in my office I had a call from the press in Sault Ste Marie, who are now finding it very difficult

to access Queen's Park. The cutting of the tie line has effectively cut off the ability of thousands of people in this province to phone Queen's Park and access a minister's office by simply calling one number and asking for that office. Now, if they don't have the number, if they don't have the money that's required to pay for long distance, they cannot phone Queen's Park, they cannot talk to ministers, they cannot give their input, nor can they hear from government offices just exactly what they're doing and why they're doing it. This is disgraceful. It's a diminishing of and disrespect for democracy.

We're going to hear, later today or tomorrow, another piece of legislation: the diminishing of the number of MPPs in this place. There will be no input there either.

PAULA STEPHANSON

Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings): I would like to congratulate Paula Stephanson for her successful swim of Lake Ontario on August 16 and 17. At the age of 17, Paula is one of the youngest swimmers to successfully cross the lake. This feat demonstrates the drive and sheer willpower of this local teenager.

At 11:40 pm on August 16, Paula not only entered the cold waters of Lake Ontario but began swimming against the wind and seven-foot waves. The 52-kilometre swim took Paula just over 22½ hours. Paula was accompanied by a sailboat with navigational equipment, two Zodiacs and a power boat.

A swimmer cannot be touched during a swim but may rest periodically by treading water or changing strokes. Each hour during the swim, Paula had some rest time before getting back into the rhythm.

Congratulations, Paula, on a terrific accomplishment.

HAMILTON SESQUICENTENNIAL

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Mr Speaker, first I want to add my congratulations on your election and a job well done so far.

I rise today to speak of the sesquicentennial celebrations that have been going on all year in the city of Hamilton. The great and glorious city of Hamilton is celebrating 150 years of existence. These celebrations will come to an end at the end of this year, which has been a great year for Hamilton.

We have hosted the Juno Awards, a visit by His Royal Highness Prince Charles, a visit by Governor General Roméo LeBlanc, the Ford world curling championships, and we're going to cap this off in November with the Grey Cup game in Hamilton, hopefully involving the Hamilton Tiger Cats.

This has taken a tremendous effort month after month by many people, led by Mayor Morrow and Hamilton city council, who have shown tremendous vision and leadership in planning these celebrations. I want to congratulate the mayor and the council; the co-chairs of the sesquicentennial, Milt Lewis and Vincenza Travale; the executive director, Carmen Rozzoto; and most of all the tens of thousands of Hamiltonians who have worked hard, participated, become involved and made this celebration truly a great event in the history of the city of Hamilton.

I know everyone in this House joins me in wishing Hamilton another 150 wonderful years. I'm sure the Premier and everyone in this House wish the Tiger Cats a Grey Cup victory in November in Hamilton.

EDUCATION

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): In order to counter some of the negative comments that have been made by the Minister of Education and Training about our public education system in Ontario, I thought I should put on the record some facts.

Ontario's graduation rate in 1993 was 84%, which is two percentage points higher than the national rate. On average it's about a 10% improvement per decade since the 1960s.

Canada has the highest post-secondary education participation rate in the world, with more than 40% of graduates going on to higher education. In Ontario the participation rate is 50%.

Canadian students who have graduated since 1989 are generally more literate than those who graduated ahead of them: 25% of Ontario students aged 16 and over are reading at the highest literacy rate measured.

There are a number of awards that have recognized excellence in our education system. Here are just a couple of examples.

Doris Chan, a student of the North York Board of Education's A.Y. Jackson Secondary School, was one of four Canadian students who competed at the 28th International Chemistry Olympiad.

Of the six students representing Canada in the International Mathematics Olympiad in India, four were from Ontario.

We've already seen the award for the Durham Board of Education and White Pines Collegiate in Sault Ste Marie.

There are many, many others who have won awards in education in Ontario. I think we should celebrate the successes of public education.

1340

ISLINGTON RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): I rise today to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Islington Ratepayers Association and the celebration which I had the pleasure of participating in earlier this month.

The association has made a significant contribution to the Etobicoke community through its suggestions and feedback surrounding the activities of various levels of government. When it comes to matters at Queen's Park,

the members of the Islington Ratepayers Association are very vocal. For example, this organization supports our initiatives to decrease the size of government, is optimistic about the recommendations of the Crombie commission and wants to see changes made towards a more efficient and accountable government.

When I was at the celebration last week it was a pleasure to meet many of the individuals who are so interested in the changes we're making. It was clear that the recent legislation to decrease the number of MPPs at Queen's Park was well received.

Those involved with the ratepayers' association should be proud of their achievement. Over the years, members such as president Terry Reardon have done a great service to the area through their goodwill.

On behalf of the province, I express my gratitude to the people of the Islington Ratepayers Association and wish them success in the years to come.

EDUCATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I rise today to point out some examples of doubletalk regarding education that the minister and the government continue to espouse.

On August 20, addressing the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the minister said, "I'd have to say it's about fixing a system that's not working." Meanwhile, in Europe on September 11 the Premier said to potential European investors in London, England, "Ontario has a top grade education system." Then again, CBC News at Noon on September 20 quoted lawyer Leon Paroian, who is reviewing Bill 100. In response to a brief which basically said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," Paroian replied, "I have a different proverb. 'If it ain't broke, break it.'" It sounds to me like the strategy of creating a crisis.

The minister's doubletalk on the value of teachers in his statement on World Teachers' Day, "You are the lifeblood of our education system, bringing vitality and energy to the classrooms of Ontario," flies in the face of the many critical remarks he has made over the last year about teachers. Further, the minister stated on October 3, 1996, "The achievements of education in Ontario are the achievements of Ontario teachers." If the minister really believes this, he should be prepared to involve the teachers' associations and federations in meaningful consultations related to his numerous reforms.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): In this House, the Minister of Health has said a number of times, in relation to the \$2 fee that is now being charged on drug benefits, that part of the action of the government has been to improve the Trillium drug plan. But those of us who work in our offices in our constituencies know that there are many complaints about the Trillium drug plan that need to be dealt with. These are numerous, especially for people who are in particular danger.

I have had a number of discussions with the AIDS community around the Trillium drug plan, and they have

the following concerns that they want me to bring to the Legislature.

First, because the plan takes into effect last year's income, someone who becomes ill and has a sudden drop in income is judged to have a deductible at the previous year's income.

There's a 12- to 13-week wait, and when drugs cost anywhere from \$500 to \$1,500 a month, that puts people in real jeopardy in terms of carrying on their drugs.

People cannot find anyone to talk to personally in the Trillium drug plan office. They have reported that those people working in the office say there are only five people remaining in that office to process claims and that this becomes worse at the end of the year.

I would urge the Minister of Health to look at the Trillium drug plan and keep his promise to make it more effective.

SAM ALFIERI

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): A couple of weeks back on a Saturday I participated in a ceremony commemorating the life of Mr Sam Alfieri, a famous Niagara Falls entrepreneur who passed away in February 1996 at the age of 69. For over 40 years, until his death earlier this year, Mr Alfieri ran the famous Capri Restaurant, located at the corner of Stanley and Ferry. Over the years, the place has been frequented by many Hollywood stars and thousands of tourists.

Mr Alfieri was a popular entrepreneur and committed member of the Niagara Falls community. For more than 20 years, Mr Alfieri served on the city of Niagara Falls parking and traffic committee. He also served several terms with the Niagara Falls Canada Visitor and Convention Bureau and spearheaded efforts to improve Ferry Street, where his business was located.

But many of his friends and close acquaintances remember Mr Alfieri as someone who had a passion for politics. His restaurant is known as a hangout for the city's politicians. Many of us would seek Mr Alfieri's advice because he had a knack for knowing what was on the public's mind. Anyone who avoided his advice did so at their own peril. I know I will sincerely miss my chats with him and his warm pats on the back.

The life of Mr Alfieri has touched us all. I and all the people of Niagara Falls will certainly miss his kindness, friendship and generosity, but his legacy will live on in the kindness and hospitality of his family.

VISITOR

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Being a stickler for the rules, as you are, and a well-informed person, I'm sure that you would not want our proceedings to go on this afternoon without our recognizing that we are doing so under the watchful eye of Hugh MacGinnis, the reeve from the village of Dutton, who is sitting in the gallery to the end of the chambers.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): That is not a point of order — it's not anywhere near a point of order — but I certainly will.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I see my friend is back today. After perusing

Hansard very, very diligently and carefully, I can't find any place where the Minister of Health would get the impression that I didn't like him. I just want to clarify the record and say that I do like him all of the time, even though I don't like what he's doing.

But more importantly, he's still waiting for the puppy that our caucus promised him, so my point of order, Mr Speaker, is that I'd like to present him with a puppy. You'll notice that the puppy won't bark, but it won't dirty. It has a head of stone. It truly is a commonsense puppy. Could I have one of the pages deliver it to him?

The Speaker: That, again, is not a point of order. You may give the Minister of Health a puppy in your own time. I don't know if it's appropriate to be doing it here.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Ministers' statements? None. Then I will respond to the point of order raised by the member for Algoma yesterday with respect to signs in the Legislature. I spent a considerable amount of the hours in between yesterday and today reviewing some of the previous decisions by the previous Speakers brought forward with respect to signs in the Legislature. It falls under standing order 13(a), which says in part, "The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum," which is a rather broad and very interpretive approach to signs in the Legislature.

In 1989, after due consideration, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly advised the Speaker that standing order 13(a) gave him sufficient authority to rule on the use of signs or displays in the House as he sees fit.

While exercising some discretion, past Speakers have sought to discourage the use of signs and props in the chambers, and the examples are several. I'll just mention a few.

In January 1983, acting Speaker rules the member for Oakwood should put his sign down and stop the demonstration.

In May 1983, Speaker directs the member for Nickel Belt to remove the sign from the front of his desk.

In March 1991, the Speaker addresses House after question period: "I just hope that we can continue in the future having members speak without bringing props into the House."

In June 1991, the Speaker allows the clock to tick during question period until members put signs away.

In June 1993, acting Speaker directs the member for Nepean to remove props, saying, "Props are not considered to be parliamentary."

In November 1993, the Speaker rules that we discourage all members from bringing signs into the chamber and asked them not to display them.

I know the member for Algoma brought forward the ruling in 1991 by then Speaker Warner with respect to the member for Etobicoke West. If you happen to read a little further on, in December 1993 the same Speaker Warner ruled, "Speaker Warner admonishes the member for Etobicoke West and directs him to remove a sign reading, 'Call Police.'" He stated, "Members will know that in order to try and maintain decorum in this House, we discourage members from having signs of any

description and would ask the members to please abide by that." I am in complete agreement with Speaker Warner.

1350

Further, I would like to inform the members of the Legislature that it's important that we try to get as many questions on the question period agenda as possible. I know the backbenchers, having sat on both sides of the Legislature in the back bench — it is an important part of their jobs to represent their constituents in the most visual and effective way they can, which is to get questions on the legislative agenda during question period.

I would ask that the leaders of both parties and the respondents in the cabinet please make your questions and answers more succinct, direct and to the point. It seems to me reasonable that you could probably get a question put in a minute or a minute and a half. If it isn't going to get put in a minute or a minute and a half or less, it probably isn't going to get put. That is probably the analogy you can use.

To the ministers, the same situation applies. We should be able to get a reasonable response in a minute to a minute and a half, and it would give the opportunity for both back benches to get more involved in question period, which I think is both productive and effective for all the members in the House today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): In light of what you've just stated, Mr Speaker, I'll make my question a one-line question to the Premier because the Minister of Education is absent today.

Mr Premier, do you agree with me that school libraries and the reading of books are an integral part of classroom education?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Yes.

Mr Gerretsen: The answer was "yes," but let me just remind you that in your Common Sense Revolution you stated, "Classroom funding for education will be guaranteed." Students across Ontario are feeling your cuts in the classroom. When students in St Thomas returned to school last month they found there was something missing in their school, namely their librarian. Students in Hamilton have actually found themselves locked out of their school libraries because of your budget cuts.

Premier, will you admit that your cuts are having an effect on classroom education and that your cuts are denying students the opportunity to read and learn in their school libraries?

Hon Mr Harris: Absolutely to the contrary, there is not a single action that has been taken by this government or the Minister of Education or the Minister of Finance that ought to have caused any diminution of service in the classroom.

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): You can do better than that. Twenty per cent cut —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Hon Mr Harris: We are dealing with a system run by school boards, programs delivered by school boards, of

which there has been extensive examination and study, one by a former cabinet minister of the Liberal Party, who estimated I think that in the bureaucracy above the schools, above the classroom, not including libraries, there might be upwards of \$1 billion being wasted.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Read the whole report.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Harris: There was a reduction of less than 2% that was passed on to the school boards, about \$260 million in operating last year, peanuts compared to what former Minister Sweeney identified as waste within the system. So if there has been an effect on classroom teaching, it ought not to be tolerated, and the Minister of Education is looking at ways, even though it's not our jurisdiction, to ensure to the best of our ability that it does not take place.

Mr Gerretsen: You don't seem to understand that libraries in schools are the great equalizers, that no matter how rich or how poor a student is, school libraries provide an opportunity for all children to learn. Your cuts are taking that away from them.

We have worked hard to increase literacy in this province over the last number of years, and your actions are undermining these efforts. It's not just in school libraries that programs are being cut; literacy programs have been cut as well. The ministry has cut literacy programs by as much as 25%, according to the Ontario Literacy Coalition, programs that support libraries specializing in literacy materials. Many school boards are claiming that as a result of the funding cuts they are dropping adult literacy programs.

Will you admit that your cuts are destroying literacy programs, taking books away from children and hurting the education system that you are so quick to brag about overseas as being number one yet are condemning at home?

Hon Mr Harris: No, there has not been one single action taken by anybody — the Minister of Education. Certainly the Premier has not suggested to boards: "Cut libraries. Cut services there. Cut literacy money being spent there." I appreciate the member's concern, because I think he shares with me my belief that we are dealing here in Ontario with an excellent education system, the best teachers you are going to find anywhere in the world. This is what we've all been saying, including the minister. But there is a problem with a system where, when faced with reductions in the vicinity of 2%, the only response is to go and attack programs that are of benefit in the classroom and to literacy. That's not acceptable, that's not to be tolerated and I hope you will work with us to make sure that's not the case in the future.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Gerretsen: When you cut the provincial funding by as much as 25%, you are affecting the programs.

The Speaker: Who's your question to?

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): My second question is to the Minister of Health. Welcome back to the House. Before I proceed, perhaps I will fill

you in on what's happened during your absence. The people of Sudbury have been left scrambling to save their local health care services after your Big Blue Tory bulldozer plowed under two of their hospitals, slashed their hospital operating budgets by \$41 million and cut the number of acute care beds from 571 to 365. In Thunder Bay, exactly the same thing has happened. They've got 50% fewer acute care beds. Right here in Toronto, as a matter of fact, the Toronto Hospital has fired over 322 nurses. Remember, those are the people who cure people, as you like to call the health care providers. This is another direct result of your cuts to hospital budgets, seriously threatening patient care. That makes for quite a busy week while you were away.

I say "you" because indeed you are the minister responsible for the steering of the so-called restructuring committee that's slashing \$1.3 billion out of the health care system.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Gerretsen: In light of everything I've stated, is this what you envisioned when during the last election you promised voters that your government would protect health care: \$1.3 billion in cuts to health care, hospital closures and hundreds of layoffs?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member mentions my absence, which to say the least is unparliamentary, but I will remind members that Honda Canada Manufacturing is expanding, some 1,600 new jobs. I was at Honda yesterday, along with the Honourable Bill Saunderson, celebrating that expansion and that tremendous vote of confidence from the manufacturing sector in the province of Ontario.

In response to the honourable member's question, we have fully kept our campaign promise and our Common Sense Revolution promise to maintain health care spending at \$17.4 billion and above. Secondly, the record would be clear that over the four and a half years I served as my party's health care critic I never once criticized the hospital restructuring. The previous government launched over 60 studies and spent \$26 million. I assumed all the way along, as did the district health councils, that something would be done with those studies, that they wouldn't be allowed to gather dust on the shelves and that patient care would become the focus of the health care system. When you see, as has been pointed out in the commission's two reports today, excessive administrative costs well above the provincial average, then I think it's incumbent upon all of us to encourage the restructuring and to drive those excessive administrative dollars down to patient services.

Mr Gerretsen: Minister, if you think that less funding, fewer hospitals and fewer health care providers will make for better patient care, you're fooling yourself but you're not fooling the people of Ontario.

1400

Let me tell you what your actions will result in: cheaper, second-rate health care and more money in the pockets of the rich, thanks to your 30% tax cut. You say your cuts will not affect patient care. Tell that to the people of Thunder Bay and Sudbury, who have already been dealt their sentence from your so-called restructuring

commission. Tell that to the thousands of people in Kincardine and Wiarton, who are bracing for the Big Blue bulldozer machine to hit their communities. Tell that to the hundreds of nurses at the Toronto Hospital and the 15,000 nurses province-wide who will no longer be around to care for patients. Tell that to the patients who are now aware of the fact that former cafeteria workers are being trained to perform tasks once reserved for medically trained professionals because hospitals are trying to meet your bottom line.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Gerretsen: Minister, will you not acknowledge what thousands of people have been trying to tell you for so long, will you not admit that your cuts to health care are affecting patient care and threatening to destroy quality and accessible health care as we know it?

Hon Mr Wilson: What I will admit is that this is the only government in Canada that's undergoing health care restructuring that has not cut the overall health care budget. He may want to talk to his federal Liberal cousins, who cut health care and social service transfers to this province by \$2.1 billion. We've had to cut just about everything else in government, outside of the protected areas, to make sure that we can continue to fund the health care system at the level we committed to during the campaign and that we've more than lived up to since coming to office over a year ago.

Mr Gerretsen: You've cut \$1.3 billion out of the hospital budgets, and you know it. Do you not hear what the thousands of people in communities across Ontario are telling you? They are telling you that they're frightened. They're worried that they will not be able to access the kind of care that they need in their own communities. They know that when a \$1.3-billion cut is driving the restructuring process, cheaper, inferior and less accessible health care is inevitable. These are the real concerns out there. These are the people you made your election pledge to, and they want answers.

Minister, will you not finally agree that a second-rate health care system is much too high a price to pay for your 30% tax cut? Will you not, together with the Minister of Finance and the Premier, admit that enough is enough, restore the \$1.3 billion cut and protect health care for Ontarians, as you promised in your last election?

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, there is nothing to restore. The honourable member is incorrect. The health care budget is fully intact. We're making the investments in community health and in mental health and community-based services as required, not only on direction from the commission but much ahead of what the commission is recommending.

Secondly, I'd remind — because I'm free to talk about Thunder Bay now that the commission has issued its final orders. Thunder Bay is only being asked to do what other hospitals are doing in Ontario. The 586 patient-days per 1,000 population, 25% of our hospitals in Ontario are currently achieving that rate, and the commission adjusted for the fact that it is the north, that it is the northwest and that they may have to admit people more often. What they said was, "You can admit people as often as you used to in the past, even though that's well above the provincial average, but they shouldn't stay as long if

you're applying all the modern techniques and doing what other hospitals are doing in the province." So this isn't revolutionary, it's not pushing the envelope with respect to expectations that we should have for our health care providers and our administrators and our hospitals, because we already have 25% of the hospitals in the province meeting those expectations and truly have already undertaken their own restructuring to become efficient. Quality of care has not suffered in those 25% of hospitals.

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: Quality of care is not suffering. Dr David Naylor's second atlas came out — Mr Speaker, really quickly — just a few months ago and he cannot find any evidence to substantiate your stories about suffering quality and access.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The question has been answered. The leader of the third party.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Last month, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, UNITE, made a presentation to the committee studying your bad bosses bill that attacks workers' rights set out in the Employment Standards Act. These workers put on a sweatshop fashion show. They know that your government's Bill 49, the bad bosses bill, would make conditions worse for low-paid women by making it more difficult for them than ever before —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. To the leader of the third party, you know full well that demonstrations aren't allowed in this place. I would ask that it discontinue.

Minister of Labour, you're on. Respond.

Mr Hampton: I have not had a chance to put the question.

The Speaker: Oh, I'm sorry. If you'd put it quickly, please, then.

Mr Hampton: I will put the question. It appears that the government doesn't want to see the pricetags on the clothing, so let me just put it to you this way, Minister. The women who are wearing that clothing were paid less than the minimum wage for manufacturing that clothing, for sewing it, less than the minimum wage. In fact, you're going to make it more difficult for those women to even have the minimum wage enforced; you're going to make it more difficult for them.

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mr Hampton: Why do you insist on taking workers' rights out of the Employment Standards Act? Why do you insist on making it more difficult for women like that to even have the minimum wage observed, to even get their wages paid, to even raise a complaint with the Ministry of Labour? Why are you doing that?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour): To the leader of the third party, I am shocked and I am surprised that you can stand there, after having been in opposition for five years, as I was, and sending you letters and telling you that there was a problem on behalf of these

women. I want to tell you that it indicates here that you never made any commitment to these women, and yet you've got the gall to stand up in this House today and ask for appropriate protection. We are giving those women the protection they deserve, that you refused to do; that's why we are doing a complete review of the Employment Standards Act. We will ensure that there are basic minimum standards and that these people will receive the protection they deserve, which, I can tell you, you refused to commit to do in the five years when you were in government.

Mr Hampton: It's interesting to see how the government now attempts to rewrite history. We at least gave women like that the opportunity to join a union, to fight for their own rights, rights that you're taking away; that's what we did. We at least sat down with women like that and started to work on a process that would mean that the minimum wage could be enforced; you're taking that away.

I want to go back to the point. Those women were paid a piece rate of \$4.52 to make that clothing, which sells for \$59.45; \$59.45 is what the clothing sells for in Ontario stores, and they were paid a \$4.52 piece rate, which works out to \$5.40 an hour. Yet you are going to make it even more difficult for them to enforce the Employment Standards Act.

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mr Hampton: That's why they came here today: not to complain about what we did under Bill 40 for them but to point out that you're going to take money out of their pocket, you're going to make it more difficult for them to enforce the Employment Standards Act in order that you can give the worst bosses in this province more money. How do you justify that, Minister? How do you justify it?

1410

Hon Mrs Witmer: I want to just tell the leader of the third party one more time that I have met with this group of women on several occasions while I was the opposition critic for labour and now as the Minister of Labour. I understand their concerns. We are the first government since 1974 that is prepared to completely review the Employment Standards Act in order that women such as those here today have the opportunity to make sure that the basic minimum standards are there for their protection. We are going to be enforcing the act. We're the first government that has had the courage to deal with the Employment Standards Act.

Mr Hampton: Those women tell a slightly different story from the Minister of Labour. Yes, they acknowledge that the Minister of Labour has met with them. Then the Minister of Labour has totally ignored them. What they don't understand is that the Minister of Labour keeps promising a review of the Employment Standards Act. They ask the Minister of Labour: "Why are you cutting us before you do the review? If you're so interested in our welfare, why don't you put off the cuts and why don't you do the review of the Employment Standards Act and see how it can be improved instead of cutting workers' rights?"

They also ask another question, and maybe you can answer this. If you want to improve the Employment

Standards Act, if you want to ensure that it will be enforced, why did you lay off a third of the Ministry of Labour staff whose job it is to enforce those labour standards? Why did you do that if you're interested in enforcing it?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I want to again indicate to the leader of the third party that we have made tremendous strides since taking office over one year ago. When we came into this position, there were 4,000 cases before the officers who were dealing with the employment standards act. We have been able to reduce that caseload significantly. We are the first government that has demonstrated a commitment. We have moved people around. I also want to tell you that we have endeavoured to improve communication about the act for workers such as the workers in this audience today. We translate the information into different languages.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): We had to force them to take the bill out to public hearings. You wanted to ram it through in two weeks.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre.

Hon Mrs Witmer: For the first time, as I indicated to you before — and I know that the critic for labour is not interested in listening because he had five years in opposition in order to help these women —

The Speaker: Answer the question, please, Minister of Labour.

Mr Christopherson: You don't want to listen. You stand there and lie. It's lies.

The Speaker: Order. I ask the member for Hamilton Centre to withdraw that comment.

Mr Christopherson: Mr Speaker, if I said something unparliamentary I withdraw it.

The Speaker: No, I think it's got to be a little clearer, member for Hamilton Centre. I want you to withdraw the comment you made. It's very clear what you said. You know exactly what is unparliamentary.

Mr Christopherson: Speaker, I think I've followed the format used by many members of this House in withdrawing. I said that if I said anything unparliamentary, I withdraw it.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre, there are no ifs, ands or buts about it. What you said was unparliamentary. I give you the last warning to withdraw. Withdraw.

Mr Christopherson: Speaker, I sincerely do not believe I am doing anything wrong procedurally and I stand by what I said.

The Speaker: I give the member for Hamilton Centre a last opportunity. There's nothing "if" about it. It was unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw the comments. Last chance.

Mr Christopherson: Mr Speaker, I have used exactly the same language, I believe, in the past when I have attempted to be in proper accordance with the rules. I say to you, with respect, sir, if I said anything unparliamentary then I withdraw it.

The Speaker: Thank you, member for Hamilton Centre. Again, this is the first ruling and I will let the member for Hamilton Centre stand, but I'm going to suggest that in the future, to withdraw, you withdraw the remarks you made. We know what is unparliamentary. I

will give all the House a warning: There's no "if" any more; we know what it was you said and I would ask in future that you please withdraw.

Finally, the Minister of Labour.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Just to conclude my remarks by indicating to you one more time that we are doing what no other government has done since 1974; we are going to ensure that the basic minimum standards are protected and we are going to make sure that the women in this gallery receive the protection they deserve.

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: The record will show that the Minister of Labour has done away with inspections and done away with enforcement, and then says there's no problem. That's what's really going on.

NURSING STAFF

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My second question is for the Minister of Health, the minister who is more and more assuming control over the destruction of hospital care in Ontario.

Minister, 322 nurses at Toronto Hospital received layoff notices on October 2, 242 full-time and 80 part-time. The chief executive of the hospital says that the layoffs are a direct result of the cut in funding from the provincial government. And in Windsor last week, 14 of 39 nurses at Malden Park Continuing Care Centre were laid off. What's so strange here is that Windsor's health care system has already been restructured. In fact Malden Park is a result of the restructured services in Windsor, but still they were hit with a 6% decrease in funding and layoffs for nurses.

People are very concerned because people know that when you lose nurses out of the system the mortality rates go up and people end up spending more time in hospital, not less. In fact a British expert was here, Dorothy Wedderburn, and she says you are making the same mistakes that Margaret Thatcher made in Britain, cutting holes and cracks in the health care system.

Does the minister think it's good for health care that all these nurses were laid off at Toronto Hospital and that it's good for health care that these women were laid off at Malden Park in Windsor? Does the minister think that's good for health care?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): Hospitals are autonomous corporations. The government of Ontario doesn't own any of the 219 public hospitals. They have public boards that make decisions. At the end of day, though, my responsibility as Minister of Health on behalf of the people of Ontario is to make sure that quality and access is maintained. I can assure you that this year for the first time we sent back more operating plans of hospitals because we didn't feel they were protecting quality — they weren't cutting administration first, for example — and that we're doing everything we can to make sure both quality and access to services are maintained as hospitals become more efficient.

So with respect to the Toronto Hospital, we looked at their operating plan and we're confident at this point that they'll be able to maintain quality and access because of

the new way they're doing business in terms of having teams of nurses not just assigned to a unit where there may or may not be any patients, but teams able to respond to the actual patient needs throughout the hospital.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: It is a new way of allocating human resources for that hospital. It's not a new way for the system. We'll be monitoring it very carefully to make sure both quality and access for patients are maintained.

Mr Hampton: I'm beginning to think we should call the Minister of Health the minister of fantasyland. He takes \$343 million out of hospital budgets. Those hospitals are very clear with him, as they are with everyone else, that the minister's cuts are the issue. It's the minister's cuts that are forcing the layoff of nurses here in Toronto, in Windsor. It's the minister's cuts that are going to put 900 front-line nurses and health care workers in Thunder Bay out on the street without a job and it's the minister's cuts that are going to put hundreds of nurses and other health care workers in Sudbury out on the street without a job. It's no one else; it's the minister's cuts.

I want to ask the minister again, do you think it's good for health care for people that all of these people, all of these health care workers, all of these nurses, are being laid off as a result of your cuts? Do you think that's good for health care? Do you think that's good for people across Ontario?

1420

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, the honourable member from the party across the floor has a lot of gall to ask this question. Over 2,000 nurses were laid off in the five years that you were in office. You closed 8,600 hospital beds. The problem is, you forgot to get rid of the administration. You know, just maybe if you'd done some restructuring properly over there, actually got rid of the waste and duplication and the excessive administration in our system, there would be more money around today for patient care. So what we're having to do is to go through the restructuring.

We've already invested \$170 million in community-based care, creating 4,400 new jobs for nurses and homemakers and other health care providers. The health sector training and adjustment program has already had over 2,000 nurses go through it in terms of helping them to retrain for jobs in the community. Health care is a growing sector in this province overall. Yes, shifts are occurring, but there are jobs in health care in this province. It's one of the expanding sectors as the population gets older and grows.

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: There's a net employment increase in health care. It's just that some people will have to retrain to get the new jobs in the community-based side of the sector.

Mr Hampton: The minister comes right back to the point we've been trying to drive home for weeks and he wants to ignore. The fact is that millions of dollars are being taken out of communities like Thunder Bay and Sudbury and there is no guarantee of the community services.

At the Toronto Hospital, all of the nurses who are being laid off are not as a result of restructuring. Those are just health care cuts. The fact of the matter is, we have not seen any evidence yet of the reinvestment that is going to put those nurses and other health care workers back into health care. All we're seeing from your government is health care cuts. That's what we're seeing at the Toronto Hospital — health care cuts, nurses being laid off. That's what we're seeing in Windsor at the home for the aged — health care cuts, nurses being laid off. That's what we're seeing in Sudbury and Thunder Bay — health care cuts. We're not seeing the schemes, the plans that will reinvest and that will put those people back to work doing front-line health care.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Hampton: So I ask the minister again, do you think it's good for health care, do you think it's good for people across this province that all of these nurses are being laid off as a result of your health care cuts?

Hon Mr Wilson: Already the restructuring, without seeing any of the hospital dollars from the savings that hospitals are being asked to achieve over the next three years — that just started on April 1, so in reality the ministry or the government hasn't seen those savings — we've made all kinds of reinvestments.

Thunder Bay, for example, over the last few years has had a 136% increase in its home care budget. It is ready for the customers that will come as a result of moving towards more community-based services, which give greater dignity to individuals to remain in their homes.

Frankly, you spent millions of dollars surveying seniors. You surveyed them to death. But what came out of those surveys is that consistently they said they prefer to stay in their homes; they prefer that investments be made in community-based services.

Just on September 25 I announced \$250,000 for a crisis response service in Thunder Bay. The Thunder Bay Mental Illness Support Network gets \$166,500. We've spent several million dollars expanding cardiac stents, some of that for northern Ontario; \$170 million, as I said today —

The Speaker: Answer, please, Minister.

Hon Mr Wilson: — 4,400 new jobs in the community-based sector; an expanded diabetes network for the north and throughout Ontario. Some 40 announcements we've made in reinvestment dollars long before we've seen any money out of hospital restructuring. The fact of the matter is, we've put more money up front. That's why the budget's up this year.

The Speaker: The question's been answered.

Hon Mr Wilson: We're investing in community services —

The Speaker: New question, the opposition. Order, Minister of Health.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I'd like to continue with the line of questioning to the Minister of Health about his health care cuts. Minister, we hear a lot of buzzwords in your answers about restructuring and hospital closures, bricks and mortar, and community-

based health care. I'd like to bring you down to the patient level and talk to you about some of the cases that I and other members have to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

Richard Adams in my constituency had a heart attack in March of this year. After a series of tests through the cardiology department at Memorial Hospital in Sudbury, April 23, it was decided that he needed heart surgery and he was put on the list. At that time, he was told that it would be about two to three months before he could have surgery. Mind you, emergency cases would be coming in from time to time and the possibility was there that he would be bumped. He was pretty anxious by July. On July 20 he was told that he was 20th on a list of 194 waiting for heart surgery. They couldn't get any answers over the summer, so they came to my office on September 6 and we were able to determine that he was now 10th on the list.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Ramsay: Four days later, he was called to say that his surgery was scheduled for September 23. On September 19 he had a heart attack. They got him into surgery on September 24, but unfortunately he died a few hours after surgery. How is your restructuring and closing of 228 beds in Sudbury going to alleviate this problem?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The restructuring has not occurred. Sudbury and Thunder Bay have two to three years to make the changes. To mix the two issues is simply fearmongering.

When I announced recently the \$2 million for cardiac stents, and at the previous announcement that we made with respect to increasing the number of surgeries this year and next by 19%, Dr Hugh Scully, one of the world's leading cardiologists and cardiac surgeons, said that Ontario's doing the best job of all of the provinces in Canada. The object is to eliminate waiting lists, but I can say today that Ontario has the shortest waiting lists in Canada as a result of the reinvestments that this government made, and we made those reinvestments before we've even received the comprehensive report on cardiac care from the provincial cardiac care network. To tie restructuring into a current day-patient is a simply wrong.

At the end of the day we'll have more money for surgeries. In Winnipeg, when they restructured, they had 33% more surgeries after restructuring than before. That's because the dollars were driven into surgeries and away from administration, bricks and mortar, waste and duplication.

Mr Ramsay: I asked you how we could do a better job. I don't like the situation today. As far as I'm concerned, it's not good enough because I don't want to see 194 constituents from northeastern Ontario dying this year because they can't get to operating rooms. How does the reduction of 20 operating rooms at Memorial Hospital down to 12 mean we're going to have better access? How is closing down of the recovery rooms in those hospitals by over 200 going to mean we have better access? You're capping those operations down. Sure, we're getting a few more next year. We're getting about 19 more next year than we did for this year. We're losing

people in northeastern Ontario. The system's not working well today and your restructuring is not going to make it any better. The capping and the cutting that you're doing to pay for the Mike Harris tax cut are killing people in this province. What are you going to do about it?

Hon Mr Wilson: That's extremely unfair, to say the least. I won't comment specifically on the Sudbury restructuring because we're in that period of time when the public and others are to submit their comments to the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

But let's look at Thunder Bay. You're right, there is a specialist recruitment and retention problem. You know what? The commission is asking that we spend over \$4 million to set up a special program in addition to what we do now and what previous governments have done to really try and retain and attract specialists to the north. They've asked that we reinvest \$1.2 million in new adolescent mental health services. They've identified a gap in services and asked that we take money and reinvest it in there. There's \$2.3 million in transitional care beds. This is a new type of bed for Ontario when you don't need all of the services of a \$400 to \$500 acute care bed and you're not quite ready to go home or you're not quite ready to go into a \$95-a-day nursing home bed. They're asking for a brand-new system of beds to look after those people who are in between. It's a good and efficient use of our health care dollars. It's the proper thing to do for patients. Patients have long been asking for a transitional type of institution or type of bed.

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Wilson: All of the reinvestments identified by the commission fill gaps in services and indeed, at the end of the day, will improve the services in Thunder Bay and in other areas across the province.

1430

HOMELESSNESS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This morning at 8 o'clock, I joined with a group of people — the Ontario Coalition Against Homelessness and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, including residents of Seaton House — all very concerned about the growing number of people dying in the streets. As I stepped out of my home, I realized this morning that it was very cold and that it was raining as well. So I walked back into my warm house to pick up a coat and to pick up an umbrella, including a cap. As I drove to Seaton House, it occurred to me that the men and women with whom I was joining don't have a warm house to go back to, to pick up a warm coat, an umbrella or a cap.

A number of things have happened. According to the department of public health, many homeless deaths occur in the months of September, October and November. There are approximately 25,000 to 50,000 homeless. What are you going to do to make sure that the ravages of winter do not claim more homeless this winter?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'll refer the question to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I think the honourable member will

know that we are continuing to support municipalities in the cost-sharing arrangement we have so that they continue to provide emergency housing and shelter for those who need it.

Mr Marchese: The reason I asked the Minister of Housing is because I know that Mike Harris had appointed him to deal with issues of homes for people who don't have them. He didn't create a ministry of homelessness; he created a Ministry of Housing to deal with the issue of homes. That's the question, by and large. Homeless people do not have a warm home to go back to. He refers me to another ministry. Then the other minister says, "Oh, we're dealing with it; we're cost-sharing with municipalities." I'm not quite sure how they're dealing with the fact that more and more people are dying on the streets. That's the reality. Both of you and the Premier have the fiduciary responsibility to deal with all of the citizens of Ontario. What we have known and what we know is that more and more people will die on the streets.

The question I have for you, Minister, as I did for the Minister of Housing, is this: We've learned from an article by John Ibbitson in the August 26 Kingston Whig-Standard where he says the following: "Insiders of Ontario's Tory government say the province will not accept an inquest jury's pleadings to spend more on the homeless, claiming it only worsens the situation." Is this what the Premier appointed both of you to do? Is this your response to the homeless issue that we face here in Toronto and elsewhere?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate the concern of the honourable member about those who need such shelter. I can only repeat that the Ministry of Community and Social Services is taking its responsibility here very seriously. This funding is being maintained. We are continuing to support the municipalities in exercising this very important and, I believe, very necessary responsibility.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Last Friday, when you launched the government's new sports strategy, the Liberal Party, even before your announcement, came out with its position, I guess demonstrating the same ESP skills that led to its incredibly successful election platform strategy last year. Their inference was that this new policy would hurt sports development of provincial athletes from all levels, all the way from junior to Olympic. Do you believe this new policy hurts athlete development in this province?

Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): Absolutely not. Let me tell you what our new strategy is going to do: It's going to target our resources on the development of athletes and coaches, and it's going to be spending taxpayers' money smarter by requiring value for the resources we spend. I don't think funding administration for snooker and horseshoes is a particularly wise use of taxpayers' dollars. In fact, previous governments allowed too much of the taxpayers' support to be absorbed by administrative costs. The Liberals have lost touch —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Ms Mushinski: — with the notion of value for money. If they want to continue to support —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I say to the members of the opposition, I cannot hear the answer and I'm —

Interjections.

The Speaker: You know, it's your time, and I really believe it is your time, and the problem is that standing here is not productive. If I can't hear the answer, I can't possibly rule properly. I ask all members to allow the answer to be put. Can you please sum up, Minister of Citizenship?

Hon Ms Mushinski: I'll sum up by saying that if the Liberals want to continue to support snooker and solo swim and fly and bait casting and parachuting under the guise of competitive sport, then I would suggest they defend those decisions in their own ridings.

Mr Gilchrist: Madam Minister, on a short supplemental, before the comprehensive sports strategy was introduced, could you tell this House how much money precisely was spent on sport that went directly to the athlete and how much went towards overhead and administrative costs?

Hon Ms Mushinski: The province provides the provincial sports organizations with anywhere from 20% to 40% of their operating expenses. Of the money that we invest as a province, over 50% is spent on administration. We don't believe that's a strategic use of taxpayers' dollars in support of amateur sport. What we do believe in is directing our resources, and what this new policy will do is direct our resources to the development of athletes, coaches and volunteers, which we believe is the foundation of our provincial sports system.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we have a very serious situation in the Windsor area regarding a lack of obstetricians for women who are pregnant, and in particular women at risk who are pregnant. I know you're very aware of the circumstances in Windsor because we call you on a repeated basis. Moreover, we have had all of the women call your office. As you know, we don't have a solution yet and I'm looking for some leadership from you so that we can solve this very important issue in Windsor.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): As we speak, administrators from the hospitals in Windsor and the health care leadership are meeting here in Toronto to come to offer some solutions and advice to the ministry on what we can do. We have a very good plan, actually, that we're proposing to them, but we need their buy-in to make sure that we're not stepping on anyone's toes.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, may I suggest, that so far all of your work has been a complete failure because the result is that I currently have 68 women in my office alone that we are trying desperately to find obstetricians for. We have looked in London, we have looked in Chatham, and of course we're also looking in the United States where you suggested that they could "pop across" the river in order to deliver a baby.

I guess my greatest concern is for women at risk. I've got to get you to understand how serious an issue this is. Our Windsor hospitals are not the issue. The issue is that they don't have in some cases family doctors, in all cases obstetricians, who are prepared to deliver these children. Where women are at risk, we have a very real risk of harming the future of the children and the future of the moms.

Minister, this is very serious. Please don't just brush this aside. You've been talking about negotiation for some time. That is not an option. Gestation is only nine months long and you've been at this for several months already. I'm asking you today: You must come up with a solution. Being agreeable to pay American fees is not an answer. Our women do not want to have babies born in the US. We need obstetricians in the Windsor area and we need a solution today.

1440

Hon Mr Wilson: Other than giving constant criticism over the past few months, this member has never offered one solution. We gave obstetricians a \$14,000 raise on April 1. We're paying their malpractice insurance.

We're at the negotiating table dealing with their other frustrations. Some of them are very real frustrations, and we're very concerned about that. We are meeting with the hospital people today to offer what we think is a solution and to hear their solutions. I'd like to hear your solutions to this. You constantly scaremonger and you constantly refuse to give us the names of patients who you claim want help.

We want their names. We want to help these women. If it means sending someone to the US because they are having a difficult birth and they need the service, by golly, the service, the patient, the baby and the mother come first, and we'll do whatever we have to do to make sure mothers and children receive the services they deserve from this health care system and from this government.

Mrs Papatello: I have a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's about something given by the Minister of Health that is completely erroneous to stand in Hansard. We have continuously —

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. The member for Windsor-Sandwich, come to order, please.

Mrs Papatello: On a point of personal privilege.

The Speaker: There's no such thing as a point of personal privilege. There is a point of privilege. If you'd like to take up a point of privilege, I will take it up after question period.

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In order to build the quality child care system we have in this province today, a necessary component of government support has been the capital dollars to construct the centres. In 1994-95 your ministry spent about \$40 million in constructing new child care centres. In 1995-96 your government cut that down to \$5.8 million. This year you've budgeted \$83,000. The Ministry of Education and Training, which used to have a fund to

support the building of new child care centres in new schools that were being constructed at \$10.5 million a year, has actually cancelled that program altogether. That was a \$15-million budget line between the two ministries that's been cut to \$83,000.

How can you justify this virtual elimination of support for the construction of not-for-profit child care centres while at the same time trying to deny that you're dismantling the not-for-profit system in this province?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): It was a little difficult to hear some of the figures the honourable member across the way was using, but I don't believe she recognized the \$7 million in capital funding we spent on centres with the serious health and safety needs they had in those centres.

Ms Lankin: The minister ignored my question. The \$7 million that you spent was for health and safety upgrades at centres that were just about to close altogether. I'm talking about capital for new centre construction. Your government has cut it from a combined budget of over \$15 million a year down to \$83,000. What does that mean? that means no new centres are going to be built.

Let me give you an example that I know you're familiar with: the Central Eglinton Children's Centre in the Eglinton public school, a replacement school that's being built, a new school, and there are no dollars to replace the child care centre. That's only one of four schools in downtown Toronto where this is happening. We're going to lose four centres. We're going to lose 214 licensed spaces, and 214 kids and families are going to be without access to not-for-profit child care. You sent them a letter that said, "Go to philanthropic organizations." No child care centre in this province has ever been able to get that kind of assistance.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The question, please.

Ms Lankin: Then you said: "Go to the Toronto board. They'll fund it." Your Minister of Education and Training has said they can't spend money outside the classroom. Minister, you announced in your budget a new \$40 million for child care, we're halfway through the year, and you have not told anyone how to access that money or what you're going to spend it on. You won't be able to spend it all. Why won't you please spend \$1.5 million of that and save these four child care centres in downtown Toronto that we need so badly? Save the 214 spots for those 214 kids and 214 families.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you for the question. We are protecting that funding for child care. It's unfortunate that in this particular circumstance the school board seems to have some difficulties with their priorities on this issue. We have set out the \$600 million; we've put forward proposals on how that \$600 million is proposed to be spent.

I find this question passing strange. Last week, the honourable member was criticizing me because we weren't consulting. We are now consulting on those proposals before we make decisions, and now she's complaining that we don't appear to be moving on them. I think we need to hear and consult, and I will stand by that commitment.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): My question is to the honourable Minister of Transportation. Over the summer, I understand that the honourable minister and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced an initiative called the community transportation action program. I understand that the goal of this program is to allow and encourage communities to get the most out of their existing transportation resources. My question is, can the minister explain how the program will achieve this objective?

Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank my colleague the member for Kitchener-Wilmot. Certainly I would be happy to share this information with all the House members. We have been saying all along that this government is committed to doing better for less and spending tax dollars very wisely. That means getting the most out of the resources that are already paid for and available. Many communities have service vehicles that are not being utilized to their fullest extent. We must develop efficiencies and eliminate duplication. We are working with those communities to help them better deliver the services in a more cost-efficient way. Together with my colleagues, as the honourable member mentioned, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and also the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Minister of Health —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The answer, please, Mr Minister.

Hon Mr Palladini: — we will be working with the municipalities, assisting them in developing these opportunities. I want to give some examples, because it is important.

The Speaker: I'm afraid you don't have the time.

Hon Mr Palladini: For instance, one Ontario city —

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr Leadston: The program obviously is well intentioned, and I hope it does achieve the results that are intended. Does the minister have any evidence that this type of initiative has worked elsewhere, and are there any real savings?

Hon Mr Palladini: One example is an Ontario city that has nearly 200 vehicles at its disposal and only 20 of these vehicles are basically available for specialized transit. There has to be a better way of communication in the transit system to see how best they can utilize that.

In Philadelphia, a broker manages transportation for social services for the state. They introduced a modern management system, and the cost per trip has gone from \$21 to less than \$6. In Wakulla county, Florida, a private sector brokerage firm computerized scheduling and dispatching. The service available has gone up 50% while the costs have come down 12%.

I believe this government owes it to Ontario taxpayers to make sure we exploit every opportunity to make sure we can deliver the services in a cost-effective way.

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question involves the Americanization of Canada, similar to the last question.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): And who is it to?

Mr Bradley: It's to the Minister of Environment and Energy, who I know is lurking in the background. Minister, I know you were invited to attend the founders' meeting celebrating the founding of the Niagara Escarpment Commission last weekend. I don't know if you made it or not, but I know you were invited to that. You deserve considerable credit for that; I want to say that.

1450

May I ask you this question, however: Will you assure the people of this province that the Niagara Escarpment Commission will have full jurisdiction and control over all the lands within the Niagara Escarpment Commission and you will not turn over responsibility for those planning decisions to local municipalities, which often have a vested interest in development of those lands and which often do not have the capability in terms of the staff numbers to be able to deal with the many applications that come before the commission?

While you're doing that, would you ensure that the people you place in the position of escarpment commission members are those who are going to protect the Niagara Escarpment? Because you've already bounced five or six people who were designated to do that, and they've been bounced by your government because they aren't Tory hacks.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I want to tell the member for St Catharines I was at the dinner of the founders for conservation, along with Mr Wildman, a former Minister of Environment, and I was looking for the member for St Catharines, who is a former Minister of Environment, and the member for Ottawa East, who is also recognized, but unfortunately there weren't any Liberals at that particular founders for conservation dinner to celebrate the protection of the escarpment, to celebrate the environment and to celebrate what has been accomplished in the past.

The member for St Catharines well knows my record on the escarpment. He well knows that when I brought out the plan in July 1994, I said at that time that if I was going to err I would always err in favour of the escarpment. Therefore, I intend to appoint sensitive people to the commission, people who will uphold the protection of the escarpment, people who will have the concern of the escarpment and the preservation of the escarpment, the preservation of its beauty forever for all of the Ontarians in the future, as I have in the past.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 34(a), I'd like to advise the Speaker of my dissatisfaction with the Minister of Health and his response to my question today. I am requesting a late show.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): That's completely in order, and if you file the appropriate papers it will be done.

COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF HEALTH

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I won't prolong this, but I would like if you

could, please, to review the Hansard of the exchange between the Minister of Health and the member for Windsor-Sandwich as it relates to standing order 23(i) and determine whether or not the Minister of Health did in fact violate the order.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I did not hear anything that the Minister of Health did that would contravene any of the rules in the standing orders. If you'd like to enlighten me with respect to exactly how you felt the minister broke these rules, I would be happy to hear your point of order. But I myself didn't hear them, and if you could illuminate me a little more I'd appreciate it.

Mr Wildman: If you look at page 18 of the standing orders, it says that it is out of order for any member to impute "false or unavowed motives to another member." If you will review Hansard, I would think it would be quite clear that the minister did in fact impute motives.

The Speaker: I say to the member for Algoma, I myself didn't hear it. I'll be happy to —

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Oh, come on, Chris.

The Speaker: I myself didn't hear it, I say to the member for Algoma. There are many comments across the floor that I don't hear. I'll be happy to review Hansard, if that's what's needed, and if there is any action to be taken I'll certainly do it.

The minister is here as we speak. I would ask the minister if he would —

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: If I may have my two cents' worth on this, I in no way broke any rules in this House. I honestly answered the question, as I always do, and I think it's an absolutely cheap shot by the member for Algoma to raise it in such an underhanded way; I really do.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Yes, you did.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, order.

Mr Wildman: Mr Speaker, I rest my case: Now he's imputing my motives.

The Speaker: I will tell the members that I can always ask the Minister of Health to withdraw.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): No ifs, ands or buts.

The Speaker: No ifs, ands or buts; I agree with the member for Beaches-Woodbine. But I will say that I did not hear anything that was out of order. If he chooses to withdraw, that is a decision that he can make. I didn't hear anything that was out of order, and it's not up to me to go back and check Hansard. If you'd like to bring it —

Interjection.

The Speaker: I'm asking for order. If you'd like to bring it back tomorrow — you go through Hansard and bring it forward to this House and rise on a point of order — you can. I've asked the Minister of Health if there's anything he feels he should withdraw. He says he hasn't. Then we will move on because I heard —

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): It's your job. You could review Hansard.

The Speaker: Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member from Hamilton, I want you to come to order. I want the members opposite to come to order on the opposition side.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: To be helpful to you perhaps, I think the Minister of Health, in an answer to the member for Windsor-Sandwich, said that the member for Windsor-Sandwich was not trying to solve the problem, and I may be paraphrasing here, but merely to score political points. The question was asked in an attempt to solve a problem and the Minister of Health clearly imputed motives. I think the minister, who obviously came running back in slightly out of control, as periodically happens, could solve this problem by simply standing in his place and saying: "I'm sorry. I did impute a motive. That was improper."

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. With all due respect to the members of the Legislature, I will say to the members I did not hear the Minister of Health —

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): All of us heard it.

The Speaker: Member for Parkdale, come to order, please. I did not hear the minister say anything that was out of order. I might add that if we are now at the stage where members opposite and the government side are going to start suggesting we withdraw things like, "You're not helping to solve the problem," may I suggest that we may well be here for a long, long time trying to withdraw and not withdraw. I didn't hear him impute motive. I asked the minister to withdraw. He said he didn't impute motive. He said he will not withdraw. It's up to the members of this Legislature to go over Hansard. If you believe there is something in Hansard, you may deal with it in that vein. I did not hear it. I've asked the minister to withdraw. The question's been resolved. There will be a late show. Thank you very much.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I've requested a late show with the Minister of Health and I would suggest, given the nature of the discussion that we've just gone through, I would especially request the Minister of Health himself to be present for the late show so that he can deal with this matter.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. There's nothing at all that the Speaker can do to ensure those things. It's well beyond the role.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe this is a point of order. It has to do with the 90-second suggestion you had for questions and answers. My first opportunity since you assumed the chair was in response to the first question of the day and I did not want to use up question period time or deal with your 90-second rule in paying my compliments to you, Mr Speaker, on your election as Speaker. I wished to wait beyond question period. Might I —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I can't hear the Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: Might I, not only in offering my congratulations on your election, say that from my observance, in your short time so far in your tenure you have conducted yourself with great grace and dignity and have my wholehearted support.

1500

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I don't like doing this in the House, but I'm wondering why the government has delayed the calling of a motion for the rotation of the Deputy Speaker. I expected it to be forthcoming today, in fact I expected it a while ago, but other events transpired. I'm wondering if the government knows why.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): If I can respond to that, my apologies to the House leader of the opposition party. We did discuss this yesterday. It was a matter that was delayed because of the election of the new Speaker, but that has taken place, and I'll give my undertaking that it will be forthwith. Unfortunately, we weren't prepared to deal with it today, but hopefully tomorrow. Unless something comes up that prevents it, I'll give my undertaking that tomorrow will be the day.

PETITIONS

RENT REGULATION

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads:

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster eviction by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

Many people have signed this petition and I affix my signature to this petition.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's a petition to end the spring bear hunt.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the US which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

I affix my signature to that.

TAX REDUCTION

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario from the First United Church.

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment are dealt with efficiently and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): These petitions continue to flood my office.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has recommended the closure of two hospitals in Sudbury; and

"Whereas the overall number of available beds will be reduced by approximately 35%; and

"Whereas the reduction in beds will affect Sudbury's ability to remain the referral centre for health care in northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas there will be a large number of layoffs in the health profession, impacting the quality of local health care and our Sudbury economy; and

"Whereas the global annual budget for Sudbury health care will be reduced by 25%;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to rescind the Health Services Restructuring Commission's recommendation to close two Sudbury acute care hospitals and return to the DHC model which is a two-site model."

I affix my name as I am in agreement with the petition.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, the national health and safety director of the Canadian Auto Workers union. The petition is signed by thousands of auto workers, many of whom right now are engaged in a heroic struggle to protect their jobs in this province and across North America. I want to say that we stand behind those workers in their fight there, as we do here for health and safety in the province of Ontario. The petition reads as follows:

"To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose any attempts to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"We demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional

and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

On behalf of our caucus, I affix my name to this petition also.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): I have a petition to end the spring bear hunt. A few of these petitioners are from my riding; most of them are not. However, out of respect for my constituents I'd be pleased to present this petition. It is a reiteration of the petition of the member for Fort York. I'll just read the last statement.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

I present this to the Legislature.

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

NURSING STAFF

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition from nurses in the community of London which is, as you may know, a regional health centre. The petition to the Legislative Assembly reads as follows:

"Whereas members of this community are writing to you in hopes of gaining your support with regard to the proposed wage rollbacks of nursing staff; and

"Whereas as concerned health care professionals we have been affected by many changes throughout the past several years. With layoffs, wage freezes and increasing responsibility, there has been a direct impact on both patient care and nursing as a profession; and

"Whereas the new proposal by the Ontario Hospital Association of a 20.3% wage rollback has brought forth many concerns, frustrations and disappointments. With the three-to four-year wage freeze from the social contract nurses have, in essence, already taken a rollback due

to increased tax and a higher cost of living. We understand that everyone has to take part in the solution and nurses have accepted this. In fact, we have adapted and worked together towards a better health care system. A 20.3% wage cut is not the way to continue this process; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned registered nurses have been targeted here. We are the people that the public see on their travels through the health care system. We work weekends, holidays and nights. We care for the public on a daily basis. We are the largest population of staff providing care for the public. A cut such as this devalues the service we provide. Nursing is a female-dominated profession and as such is an easy target for the cutbacks and wage rollbacks;

"This profession is asking for your help and support."

This is signed by many hundreds of nurses in the London area, and I'm proud to affix my signature.

USER FEES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I keep getting petitions on the \$2 user fee against seniors and disabled persons. This one reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has started to charge seniors a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled since July 1996; and

"Whereas seniors on a fixed income do not significantly benefit from the income tax savings created by this user fee copayment or from other non-health user fees; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 copayment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee or the painstaking task involved to fill out the application forms; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health, Jim Wilson, promised as an opposition MPP in a July 5, 1993, letter to Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

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"Therefore, we, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government to repeal this user fee plan, because the tax-saving user fee concept is not fair, is not sensitive, nor is it accessible to low-income or fixed-income seniors; and lest we forget, our province's seniors have paid their dues by collectively contributing to the social, economic, moral and political fabric of Canada."

I'm affixing my signature to this document.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government has clearly indicated that it 'wants to get out of the housing business'; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is reviewing the legal contracts and budgets of every co-op housing project in the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has announced plans to make huge cuts to co-op and non-profit housing funding; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to replace affordable housing with subsidies to private landlords; and

"Whereas co-op housing is a proven success in providing affordable homes owned and managed by the people who live in them; and

"Whereas the actions of the Ontario government threaten to destroy stable, well-maintained communities which have been built over the last quarter of a century and the investment all Ontarians have made in this type of affordable social housing;

"We request that the Ontario government sit down with the co-op housing sector to negotiate a deal which will ensure the long-term financial viability of housing co-ops and the continuance of rent-geared-to-income assistance upon which thousands of co-op members depend and which will promote greater responsibility for administration by the co-op housing sector and less interference by the government in the day-to-day operations of housing co-ops."

This is signed by over 200 people involved in co-op housing in the London area, and I'm proud to affix my signature.

MANDATORY INQUESTS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My office continues to get many petitions which state:

"To the Honourable Solicitor General and Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario has decided to scrap mandatory inquests as a result of fatalities in the mining and construction industry; and

"Whereas this unprecedented and callous decision sets workplace safety back 20 years;

"We, the undersigned, request that Solicitor General Bob Runciman and the Legislative Assembly, on behalf of all workers in the mining and construction industry, reverse his decision to remove mandatory inquests from the Coroners Act of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I am in agreement.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse and crimes such as embezzlement and robbery;

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling with widespread temptation and will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for many years to come;

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across our province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and the desperate in order that the government can cut income tax, to the greatest benefit of those with the highest income;

"Since the placement of video lottery terminals in bars in Ontario and in permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since Premier Harris and Finance Minister Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province."

I affix my signature as I'm in agreement with this petition.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government plans to sell off public services to corporations who will run them for profit; and

"Whereas after the corporate takeover it will be strictly user-pay for the services we now depend on; and

"Whereas our clean air and water standards and worker safety rules are being relaxed because corporations don't like rules that interfere with profits; and

"Whereas privatization is being sold as a way to save tax dollars, even though large companies pay little or no taxes while individual Canadians pay most of the total tax bill; and

"Whereas Bill 7 was introduced in the interests of facilitating its privatization agenda by stripping public service workers of their rights to retain fair working conditions when services are transferred or privatized;

"We, the following citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario to abandon the sell-off of Ontario's public services and reinstate successor rights for public service employees."

This is signed by people from all three ridings in the city of London, and I'm proud to affix my signature.

DELLCREST CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I keep getting petitions against the Dellcrest organization. This is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Dellcrest Children's Centre is planning to open a 10-bed open custody residence for troubled kids at 182 Dowling Avenue in south Parkdale; and

"Whereas the residence is an inappropriate site for the rehabilitation of troubled kids because it is within walking distance to illicit drug and prostitution activities; a large number of unsupervised and supervised rooming-houses that are home to ex-psychiatric patients, parolees and our society's most vulnerable and ostracized members; and a number of licensed establishments that have been charged with various liquor infractions; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Correctional Services and the Dellcrest Children's Centre have decided not to hold open discussions with our community prior to the purchase of

this house for the purpose of an open custody residence; and

"Whereas the decision to relocate also expresses a total lack of regard towards our community's consistent and well-documented wishes for the Ontario government to stop the creation or relocation of additional social service programs in an area that is already oversaturated with health and social services for disadvantaged, troubled or disfranchised people,

"We therefore, the undersigned local residents and business owners, urge the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services to suspend plans to relocate the open custody residence for troubled kids until a full review of the Dellcrest Children's Centre's decision can be conducted, and explore with us alternative locations which are more appropriate."

I will sign my name to this petition.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

UNIVERSITY OF ST JEROME'S COLLEGE ACT, 1996

Mr Wettlaufer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr72, An Act respecting the University of St Jerome's College.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES TRIBUNAUX

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 79, An Act to improve Ontario's court system, to respond to concerns raised by charities and their volunteers and to improve various statutes relating to the administration of justice / Projet de loi 79, Loi visant à améliorer le système judiciaire de l'Ontario, à répondre aux préoccupations exprimées par les oeuvres de bienfaisance et leurs bénévoles, et à améliorer diverses lois relatives à l'administration de la justice.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I adjourned the debate last evening and I'd like to take the opportunity this afternoon to make some remarks with respect to Bill 79 currently before the House with a wonderfully felicitous title, An Act to improve Ontario's court system.

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Music to my ears.

Mr Conway: I'm glad the Minister of Agriculture says it is music to his ears because I think all honourable members would hope and pray that in fact it is that. I want to say in the presence of the Attorney General that there are many aspects of the bill as presented that are highly commendable and certainly let it be clear I'm standing in support of Bill 79.

I support it if for no other reason than that critical section of the bill which deals with judicial nomenclature. I can't imagine that Charles Harnick will in the course of his term as minister of justice do anything that will make him a happier Attorney General, as far as the judges of Ontario are concerned, as that part of Bill 79 which now allows that every judge in the province, whether it is the lowly former magistrate or the highest of Ontario's superior court judges, can all be styled Madam or Mr Justice. I want to commend Charles Harnick for that. I'm sure that on behalf of the scores of judges, from the provincial court bench to the highest court in the land, there is no little bit of joy that he has managed to do this. 1520

I can well remember 10 years ago, when that nefarious Ian Scott in his court reform arranged things in so unhappy a way as to leave a battery of former High Court judges rather unclear and very much unsatisfied in the styling of themselves and their judicial roles. So I say again on behalf of those men and women of the judiciary, who clearly can't be here, that I'm sure they would want me to say on their behalf that no greater effort has the Attorney General expended than by providing in this legislation that nomenclature which now allows all judges in Ontario, high, medium or low, as we used to say, to be styled Madam or Mr Justice.

I say that somewhat facetiously because I have a great regard for judges, and we are very well served by our judges, but there are times when, in social dialogue with retired judges, I find it quite extraordinary the extent to which some seem to be interested in what the good people of Moose Creek and Willowdale might consider a mere trifle. But let me say finally, and again, that Charles Harnick has certainly put that subject to rest, and we have in Bill 79 a very important piece of amendment which makes it possible now for everyone to be styled Madam or Mr Justice.

There is also intended in Bill 79 a change that allows for the public trustee to do certain things without the rather elaborate process of court reference that has been in place for some time. I have to take the word of my colleagues who are more familiar with the legal and judicial intricacies than I that this is a good thing. I certainly hope it's a good thing.

Let me use this opportunity this afternoon to say to my friend the Attorney General that I continue to hear from too many of my constituents, whom I believe to be fair and serious in their criticism, that we still have a lot of work to do in cleaning up the office of the public trustee. Too many good people with too many very serious family concerns and problems find themselves in an endless and costly and enormously frustrating tangle with the office of the public trustee.

I know in my own family we've had some of that experience. When I think of what one of my family members, who was faced with an enormous personal tragedy, has had to endure over eight or 10 years, I've got to tell you that is not something I would want to visit on anyone else, and it's not something of which I'm very proud, given the fact that I, as one of the members of the assembly, have some responsibility for providing better answers, quite frankly, than I've been able to provide, not

just to my aunt but to other people who have complained over the last number of years.

So I would encourage the Attorney General to be as vigilant and as vigorous as he can, and I know it's certainly his intention to do that, to clean up some of those problems that have bedevilled the office of the public trustee over the last number of years. I'm not really now talking about major policy issues; it's just routine administration. It seems to be —

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The attitude.

Mr Conway: The Attorney General says it's the attitude, and perhaps it is. I myself haven't had a great deal of experience, but as I say, I am very concerned about the experiences that some very good constituents, including some of my close relatives, have had with an office of government that simply does not appear to be as efficient as we would expect.

We have as well in Bill 79 the creation of a new office, case management master. I'm told by my friends in the Liberal Party —

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): You have friends in the Liberal Party?

Mr Conway: I have friends in the Liberal Party, I say to Mr Bisson. I sound like Neville Chamberlain when I say that, and he found out where his friends really were.

The court management question is obviously an important one. I support this philosophically and conceptually. I only hope that as an administrative mechanism it works, because let me say, in a rather bipartisan fashion, that with some of what other architects of court reform have promised — these were not people associated with the current party in government — there has been much less, I would say decidedly less, performance than there has been promise. Out in the county towns of eastern Ontario, where his seatmates the top cop and the Minister of Agriculture and I live, I hear, and I suspect they hear, that things aren't as efficient or as effective as some of the advertisements that were offered eight, 10 and 15 years ago.

I'm hopeful that the new attorney, with a fresh perspective, is going to learn from that experience and — not guarantee; there are no guarantees in this business and in life generally. I expect that we are going to have some positive results from these new masters to be appointed to Ottawa, Windsor and Toronto.

Let me be a little confessional about case management and court affairs. Here I tread very personally, because I went to court this summer. I'm not a lawyer. I've probably been to court on very few occasions previously, mostly on ceremonial occasions to see some friends installed as judges. I went to court this summer as a private citizen. It was a matter relating to the Highway Traffic Act and I won. That's not the point. It was the provincial court in Cobourg, Ontario. I think my reaction was probably the reaction of a lot of people who are not normally in court, and I suspect that's a lot of people.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: I hope so.

Mr Conway: The Minister of Agriculture says, "I hope so"; I do too. I was astonished at what I experienced on that beautiful July day in that marvellous Ontario town and that gorgeous old Victoria Hall in

Cobourg. Somebody the other day asked, "What was it like?" I said: "Do you know what it was like? It was like a combination of a Moroccan bazaar and the old Toronto bus terminal on a busy Friday afternoon of a long weekend." That's what it was like. It was an astonishing place, a very important public place. Members of the assembly who are lawyers probably say, "He's just stating the obvious." It wasn't obvious to me. It was absolutely astonishing. I'm not kidding, a Moroccan bazaar, the old bus terminal; people coming and going and everyone looking for everyone else.

Let me say — I hope I'm not breaching some edict of the conflict of interest act, and I mean this as no comment on my own rather favourable result — that I couldn't believe how patient the provincial court judge was that day in the midst of what seemed often near chaos. There were scores of people, regular folks. This would be their experience with the courts of the land. There were lawyers coming and going, police officers and court officers coming and going — "Are you Morin?" "No," "Are you Harnick?" "Maybe," "Are you Conway?" "Yes" — trying to figure out who was on first and what was on second, and the poor judge and the court clerk trying to make something of this. Remarkably, miraculously, they did, to the great credit of that court official and the judge and, to be fair, certain of the lawyers present. But incredible, it was absolutely astonishing. I cannot imagine that in 1996 this was a routine day, and I checked. I asked. I said, "This must be remarkable." "No, no, it's even better on certain of these other days."

1530

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Was this Judge Guzzo?

Mr Conway: It had nothing to do with our illustrious colleague the member for Ottawa-Rideau.

I say this very seriously because we are asked, and I'm proud to come here today and support Bill 79 because it suggests that we are going to make this system more efficient. We had bloody well better make it more efficient and we all have a responsibility. Again I wish I were more knowledgeable about the legal trade because like my friend from Moose Creek I think I spied a few lawyers who were perhaps more interested in running the clock than cleaning the docket — only a suspicion, I say.

One of the feelings, one of the impressions I had to a lot of this was that there is a third party to all of this, namely, the taxpayer. We're paying a lot of the freight, we're paying for the buildings, mostly provincially but with some municipal support, I'm sure, as well. As one now rather senior member of this Legislature I was astonished and concerned by the chaos of that day, so I say to the Attorney General, you will have my support for Bill 79 and any other measures that can be shown to deal with that problem. As a matter of fact, over the course of the next few weeks I am going to make it my business to visit a couple of courts here in Toronto and perhaps some place else in the province, probably my own town, although my constituents will think the fateful day has finally arrived.

Interjection.

Mr Conway: Yes, exactly. I'm not kidding when I say this. It is one of those things. It's like middle-aged men

who have all these opinions about the health care system, and when you ask them, "When was your last personal encounter with the system?" they'll tell you, "Twenty-seven years ago, when I cracked a rib playing hockey in Brockville." Of course they're full of advice as to what's wrong with the system, but when you ask them, "When did you last sit at an emergency department in a hospital?" — "Oh, my wife did or my sister did, but no, I haven't been there." I'll tell you that being there, experiencing the reality is a very real education, and it was for me on that occasion.

There is good news. In the Ottawa area, and I might be treading very indelicately here, I heard from sources that under the very capable leadership of the senior judge, James Chadwick, there has been very considerable progress made in cleaning up one of the worst dockets in the country.

Hon Mr Harnick: Big time.

Mr Conway: And the attorney agrees. He said, "Big time."

Let me stand in my place and congratulate Mr Justice Chadwick and all the judges and court officials and administrators who have done that. Some day I might like to go to a legislative hearing to have somebody explain to me what made that work. I have some sources but they may not be entirely unbiased.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): Should we tell him?

Mr Conway: The former Attorney General, the member for London Centre, said, "Should we tell him?" Yes, Marion, and you'll have two minutes when I sit down. I'm very interested. All I know is that for many years in the 1970s and 1980s I used to hear and I used to read in the national capital press about the mess in the Ottawa courts, that the dockets were endless, the delays —

Mr Bradley: Were there any barbers appointed?

Mr Conway: Listen, I'm not here to engage in that kind of politics, Mr Bradley. I will leave that for another day.

I'm serious, because it was a mess and it's much better now. Apparently some people under the leadership of Mr Justice Chadwick made real progress. How do we do that elsewhere? I'd be very interested because as a Legislature we've got to encourage and support that. I repeat that most of the judges I have known are people of outstanding ability and very real commitment, but I'll tell you I hear from certain public servants that over the years and decades the independence of the judiciary has sometimes led to some not very good attitudes around administrative efficiencies. I don't expect sainthood from anybody on the bench, but we all have a responsibility to make sure that the system is efficient and that there is good public access.

Let me say in this respect that Bill 79 gives me an opportunity to flag some concerns that became public a few months ago when three of the country's most outstanding jurists — Charles Dubin, Roy McMurtry and Sidney Linden — wrote a letter to the Attorney General of Ontario raising very serious concerns, if not alarms, about what government cuts were going to do, as they saw it, to the administration of justice, and quoting Mr

McMurtry, a former Attorney General and now the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court (General Division) —

Hon Mr Harnick: Court of Appeal.

Mr Conway: Sorry, he's been promoted since: Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal. Quoting Justice McMurtry from that —

Mrs Boyd: Court of Appeal of Ontario.

Mr Conway: Of Ontario; thank you, Marion. It's very important to get these titles clear. McMurtry back in the late winter of this year said, "The government of Ontario is actively pursuing policy options that will seriously limit access to the publicly funded court system."

"The central irony," he went on to say, "is that we are gathered here at this conference this weekend to talk about improving our civil court system at a time when ill-considered and unrealistic budget cuts threaten the ability of our civil justice system to survive, let alone improve its service to the public. Society simply cannot function," Justice McMurtry went on, "without a system that allows people to have their disputes resolved and determined in an orderly and effective fashion. The alternative is civil chaos and perhaps even violence."

That's not just anybody. That's a Chief Justice and a former Attorney General of Ontario.

I don't expect the current Attorney General to engage this debate fully for a variety of reasons that we can all imagine, but I simply do on second reading of Bill 79 want to recall those admonitions, those concerns, some genuine alarm from people who are not accustomed to entering the public debate. In fact, I can't remember in recent times when not one but three chief justices sallied forth into the public domain and said, "There is a problem." Chief Justice Antonio Lamer has been doing something of the same, if in a rather different context, federally.

Legislators, who have a responsibility to Parliament and the province beyond, I think have an obligation to draw to the Attorney General's attention these kinds of concerns and to ensure that no bean counter loose in the department of justice or worse still in government services is in fact pursuing an agenda —

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): White beans.

Mr Conway: White beans. I say seriously that these concerns are going to have to be dealt with and I expect that in fact they are.

Just a couple of other miscellaneous items. Speaking about spending money — and I know times are tough. I see where there was an order paper question put down by one of my colleagues a few months ago and it had to do with court improvements to the magnificent old courthouse in Lanark county at Perth. The answer comes back from Dave Johnson and it just absolutely stupefies people I know in eastern Ontario. You're going to spend 1.3 million bucks over a three-year period on the Lanark county courthouse. Well, my friends say yes, certain things need to be done, but 1.3 million bucks?

That tells them two things: that times are not nearly as tough as Ernie Eves would have you believe, and more importantly, that there are some bureaucrats loose in the department of the Attorney General and elsewhere in government who are still determined to prove that by that most important measure in government bureaucracies,

namely, the amount and depth of broadloom in and around your office, they're still in charge.

That's \$1.3 million dollars being spent on a building I don't know particularly well. I've been in. It's a beautiful building. But people who are in it all the time tell me: "How is it possible? In what public interest? Yes, some renovations, some repairs, but \$1.3 million?"

1540

No. Let me be frank with you; let me be very frank. These people say to me, "You know, Conway, this is exactly what you get with some of the court reform that you and your friend Scott were all about 10 years ago." I raise this concern quite frankly in a way almost as self-criticism. This really galls me because there's probably more to the story than I've been told, but I've got to tell you, all politics is local, and when I go to Lanark county, ably represented by my friend Leo Jordan, people I know, Liberals, Tories and independents, say, "What on earth is going on at that courthouse?" In fact, the reason the question —

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Leo probably doesn't know.

Mr Conway: I can't speak for the member from Lanark, but what's our message? "Times are tough. We've got to deal with the deficit. We've got to maintain services." I think we all know that.

It's just like the Office of the Assembly. Well, I won't get into that debate, but I'm very worried that when we create these kinds of regionalized administrative mechanisms — the poor old Attorney General has got plenty to worry about, but I know from my time in politics and my life experience, short as it is, that the more regionalized you make these functions, the more likely the bureaucracy is going to be centralized and harder to manage. I hope that when we create the new court masters, we in fact get the efficiency without the kind of turf that I think is probably part of the concern with the Lanark county courthouse renovation.

I could name others. I can name others not in this particular period of time. You know, I talk about turf, and I guess this is perhaps straying a bit. I'm not going to spend too much time because there will be another time when I can talk about some of this.

I spent some of my late summer reading Archie Campbell's incredible report about the Bernardo case. Bill 79 is not the place to debate that at any great length, but I'm going to tell you one thing. My blood pressure is still twice what it should be when I think about the kinds of turf wars that Mr Justice Campbell unearthed. It is a scandal of the most outrageous kind when people in police forces — and I raise this subject in the context of turf wars. One could not imagine, surely, a greater public interest that ought to draw everyone together in common cause to the one end result, namely, getting that criminal or group of criminals that did those horrible things to those innocent young people. What we have in 450 pages of Mr Justice Campbell's report is, I submit, one of the most detailed and disturbing accounts of a turf war that almost joyfully — let me rephrase — that almost mindlessly set out to subvert the common good, the public interest. It reads like some kind of fiction, some kind of novel, and we'll talk about that another time.

I don't blame anybody here for that, but we set general policy, we fund organizations. All of us expect, whether it's courts administration or policing or the criminal justice system, that reasonable men and women, particularly when they're faced with an outrage such as we saw in the Bernardo case, are going to drop everything, including all of or most of the barriers, and marshal their efforts in common cause to the end that we all desire.

I simply raise this in the context of Bill 79 because it has been my experience that within the administration of justice there is turf, as you would expect to find it. My opening remarks about nomenclature are perhaps the most innocent and delightful example of that. I know because I've made the odd mistake and was quickly reprimanded for getting the titles wrong. As we move forward in different circumstances, I think we all have a desire to see that these barriers and these turf wars are dealt with and lessened and improved in all reasonable ways.

I want to make a final comment about something again involving judges, because this bill deals with judges. I don't know how many people have read this book, but those of you with an interest in justice affairs ought to read this book because you've paid, through I'm sure some public subvention, for part of this. We have something in this province now called the Osgoode Society. Mr Justice McMurtry is very actively involved, and they've done some fabulous work in terms of highlighting the administration of justice in celebrated cases and such like.

This is a book published this summer by the Osgoode Society by William Kaplan called *Bad Judgement: The Case of Mr Justice Leo A. Landreville*. Some of you who are a bit older than I will remember the case specifically. I don't want to get into that, but what is astonishing about Mr Kaplan's analysis is that — and remember, Landreville was the former mayor of Sudbury who accepted some shares from Northern Ontario Natural Gas. There was all kinds of controversy around conflict of interest. Those questions did not arise until after Landreville had left the mayor's chair in Sudbury and had gone on to the Ontario Supreme Court. He was then the subject of concerted pressure to get him off the bench, and in the end he was removed.

It was a case with some of the qualities of the *Bienvenue* case that we've just seen in Quebec. In both the Landreville case and, just last month, the *Bienvenue* case, Parliament was pushed to the very brink of having to exercise its prerogative to remove a superior court judge. Landreville backed down at the very last minute, as did *Bienvenue*.

What is interesting, and the reason I raise this story, is what Mr Kaplan, a noted author, tells us about the mindset of the people at the law society, who did their own investigation into the Landreville case, and then the royal commission appointed by the federal Minister of Justice, Mr Cardin, headed by probably the most distinguished jurist of the time, Ivan Rand.

Very briefly, what the Kaplan book tells us is that the law society and the Rand royal commission basically hung Leo Landreville out to dry, not primarily for what he did — and in my view he was guilty politically of a

serious miscalculation and misconduct. It was bad judgement, without a doubt. But that wasn't the bad judgement and the misconduct for which Leo Landreville was charged and convicted by, in particular, Mr Justice Rand. They just didn't like him. They just didn't like this pushy Frenchman with this flashy apparel and this, dare I say it, Jayne Mansfield kind of wife and the Mexican — I mean, it's a very interesting story. For neophytes of the judicial system like myself to read a story like this is to be reminded that we need an important and independent judiciary. But I'll tell you, they are not always acting, particularly in cases like the Landreville case, with quite the motivation that we might have expected.

Let me just say to the Attorney General, good book. I hope that if you haven't read it, you do.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Questions and comments?

Mrs Boyd: The member from Renfrew, as always, has delivered an elegant and rather charming speech on this bill. He should know that there's a simple answer to what happened in the Ottawa courthouse to change the issue of backlogs, and the word is "teamwork." The word is the judiciary working together with courts administration people, working together with the public members and the members of the bar in the courts administration committee there, looking at what was going wrong, what needed to be done to smooth out the situation and make cases move a bit more quickly. It sounds very easy when you say it quickly, but in fact it took a great deal of work.

1550

The member was quite right to mention the name of Mr Justice Chadwick, who took on that task, understood that the task was a difficult one and managed to work with the rest of the team — and it's quite a complex team. The purpose of many of the changes in this bill is to create that kind of teamwork and that kind of case management that is going to make that system work more smoothly in many other places.

With respect to the very latest comments of the member from Renfrew, when he talks about a disciplinary action and efforts to ensure that justices act appropriately, that is a very important aspect of the disciplinary process that's in the Courts of Justice Act, which is being amended by Bill 79. Part of my concern is that we would like to see a similar process set up for the case management masters being proposed in the act, to ensure that there's public scrutiny of that kind of disciplinary action.

Hon Mr Harnick: I want to say to my friend the member for Renfrew North that I appreciate his support on this bill. I also appreciate some of his very astute observations. First off, I appreciate his recognition of the job that's been done in eastern Ontario by Mr Justice Chadwick, where between cooperation from the bench and bar and thousands of hours put in by lawyers who have helped pre-try cases for no remuneration, the backlog of cases has disappeared in Ottawa. Under the direction of Mr Justice Chadwick, we've now gone to 100% case management in Ottawa. We are determined to do the very same thing in Metropolitan Toronto. We will

very shortly be going to 25% case management. Thereafter, I hope by the end of next year, we're going to be at 50% case management.

These are very important things, because what we're doing is giving to judges the opportunity and the role to control the pace at which cases move. It will no longer be based on the way lawyers want cases to move. The time limits will be set by the judges. We hope that as a result of that we will be able to move cases through the system in a way that will promote greater access and less cost to those who need the system, and that is the public.

Just to touch on a couple of other aspects of the member's comments, he very astutely noticed how busy the courts were. I can tell him that we have 1.2 million charges going through courts every year in this province. It's astounding. It's a huge number. As well, he notices the change to the name of judges, being referred to as justices, something that Ian Scott had put in a bill. It wasn't proclaimed. I don't know why. I'm pleased to be able to do that.

In terms of the office of the public trustee, he's right: We do have to do more to make that a more public and user-friendly office.

Mr Crozier: I want to respond to a few of the comments from my colleague the member for Renfrew North. He can always take a bill, in my estimation, and get into the real meat of the bill and into some of those areas where those of us who read the bill or summaries of that bill don't always find those little niches we should be speaking of.

When he talked about his visit to the court, I was particularly interested. I would say to him, just so I don't forget, that if he's going to visit a court in the Toronto area, I would appreciate it if I might be able to go along with him.

The only time I've ever been in a court, and I've had many people come to me about the same situation, is when I was selected for court duty. How wasteful that seems to be. I'm speaking from a layman's point of view, because I don't know all the administration that goes on behind the scenes. I can recall, for example, being told that I should be in court the next day for selection for jury duty, and I got a call at 11:30 at night to say that I didn't have to be there. On the other hand, during that week or two I was on call, I would expect not to have to go and then, lo and behold, I'd get a call to come in the next morning at 8 or 9 o'clock.

I hope that through this bill and further improvements to the justice system as it works in the province of Ontario, those areas where the possible jurors are brought into the system can become more efficient and certainly not waste a lot of time and effort and money of the court and of the private citizens who may be on those lists.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member for Renfrew North want to respond?

Mr Conway: I want to thank my colleagues for their kind remarks. I would say to the member for London Centre that I appreciate her candid commentary on what made Ottawa work. I guess my only question then is, what do we have to do in Metro, Hamilton, Windsor and anywhere else to create the same kind of chemistry and

synergy to get the same result? I'm entirely pleased to hear that it's as good as it is in Ottawa, because it was as bad as it could get, apparently. That's good practice. What do we have to do to replicate that, particularly across the larger urban centres in the province? To the extent that people aren't playing along with that objective, how do we responsibly bring some pressure to bear, recognizing that there is some obvious independence we have to respect?

By the way, I want to correct an impression that maybe I left in referring to the Landreville case, that if you appoint a judge to a royal commission you might end up with something much less than you expect. Again, I don't expect saintly behaviour, but I must say the Kaplan book I found astonishing. For me, Ivan Rand is a saint, and to read the account of what not just Rand but the rest of the legal and judicial establishment did to Landreville, who had made some serious mistakes, in my view, for which punishment was due, none the less gave me some very real concern, given the fact that we as parliaments and legislatures are creating more and more of these commissions of inquiry headed by judges.

In the last few seconds, I want to say that the member for Downsview, Ms Castrilli, asked me to simply read into the record some material from the crown attorneys' association, because some very incomplete information was left yesterday by the member for Wentworth North. According to our information, 461 crown attorneys earn annual salaries in Ontario of between \$48,000 and \$126,000, but only two individuals are in that highest category. The average is down around \$60,000 to \$70,000. Very wrong impressions were left yesterday that crown attorneys were now being paid, on average, about \$100,000. Our information is that only two crowns earn \$100,000 and most, overwhelmingly, earn about \$65,000 to \$70,000.

The Deputy Speaker: I have a short announcement. Pursuant to standing order 34(a), the member for Windsor-Sandwich has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health concerning obstetricians. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

Further debate?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I appreciate this opportunity to comment on Bill 79. As I'm sure most members and many of those watching have come to realize, much of this bill deals with aspects of the court system that do not show themselves to the public face on a day-to-day basis, unless of course you're a lawyer or involved in the court system directly. In reading the Hansard of yesterday, I see that my colleague the former Attorney General, Marion Boyd, the member for London Centre, dealt very adequately and very thoroughly with many of the technical aspects, given her expertise and experience in this regard.

I want to comment on some of the aspects of this bill, but in particular I want to speak to many of the issues that this government has addressed that pertain directly to Bill 79 in terms of the overall court system and justice system that we have evolving in Ontario under the Mike Harris Tory government.

1600

First of all, I want to say that we will indeed be voting in favour, at the end of second reading, for Bill 79. We are not entirely pleased with some aspects and we will be offering up amendments in committee, but in large part much of what is in Bill 79 is the result of work that was started under the jurisdiction of Premier Rae and Attorney General Boyd. Given that this government hasn't strayed too far from that, it's not unusual that we indeed would be supporting this.

Speaker, as you know, we've attempted to bring as much constructive contribution to this House as possible. That may not always seem the case. The reality is that it's just not always that possible, given this government's agenda and the harm and damage that it's inflicting on families and communities in Ontario. But Bill 79 is an opportunity for us to support a piece of legislation that will offer up some improvement.

I want to say at the outset of my remarks that we came very close in my community of Hamilton, in the heart of my riding of Hamilton Centre, to seeing a major disaster in terms of the courthouse in Hamilton. I'm sure the Speaker and members of the House will know that under the Liberals certainly in Hamilton there was an idea brought forward, headed up by a respected local lawyer named Dermot Nolan, that the old post office in Hamilton at the corner of John and Main that had been vacated by the federal government be looked at as the home of a new consolidated courthouse.

To their credit, the government of the day, the Peterson Liberals, agreed, after much work in our community, that this was a good idea. When we came to power it hadn't gotten much further than the idea that it would happen, this was a good idea, and some approvals were in place. But the real green light and money flowing hadn't happened. I'm very proud and pleased that over \$60 million was committed by our government to complete the conversion of that post office into a new consolidated courthouse that created jobs as well as improving the court system. It's also a health and safety issue, because one of the driving factors was lawyers and police officials and court officers who said that if something wasn't done with the existing facility, they were going to have to take very dramatic action. I think that would have led to the ceasing of any kind of activity in those courthouses. So this was a good thing.

Unfortunately, there was a time during this government's initial days when it was slashing and hacking away at funding in downtown Hamilton. They had announced the slashing of funding for the Lister Block, which was an important renewal project in downtown Hamilton. The four local Tory members did not fight to protect that investment; they let that money go. That building now sits there vacant with graffiti on the side of it. A tremendously important opportunity was lost. At the same time as the courthouse was on the chopping block, we also saw millions of dollars of investment in my community in non-profit housing and the jobs and the economic benefits that my community would have received chopped and gone.

This courthouse was on that chopping block. It was only through the concerted effort of everyone in our

community, particularly the leadership of Mayor Bob Morrow and regional Chairman Terry Cooke, working with me and others to ensure that the pressure stayed on this government, that this money was not denied to my community, as tens of millions of other dollars of committed investment by our government had been taken away from my community and those jobs ripped away from my community.

For anyone who thinks I'm being a bit of an alarmist, go talk to the people in Brampton, because they weren't quite as fortunate, as I understand it. We were going to do the work there, and that work and that project, as I understand it, has been indefinitely suspended by this government. So Hamiltonians had every reason to be fearful we were going to lose that courthouse.

I also want to draw attention to a commitment this government made with regard to justice and law enforcement. In the Common Sense Revolution, they said, and I quote: "The people of Ontario are rightly concerned about community safety in our province, particularly the increasing incidence of violent crime. That is why funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed." I'm repeating this for emphasis: "That is why funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed."

Yet what do the experts in the field say? Well, here's what the police had to say. David Griffin of the Police Association of Ontario, in a news release of January 18 of this year, said, "The Progressive Conservative government is abandoning its law-and-order promises." That's from David Griffin of the Police Association of Ontario — not a group, quite frankly, that was opposed to the election of this government, because they believed them when they made that commitment and that guarantee about funding for law enforcement. They're saying, "The Progressive Conservative government is abandoning its law-and-order promises."

What else? Well, John Moor, president of the Police Association of Ontario, said that Premier Harris "has betrayed the police." That was in the *Toronto Star*, January 10 of this year, that the Harris government "has betrayed the police."

On the court system side, we know that Chief Justice McMurtry, at a Canadian Bar Association conference in February 1996, said, "The government of Ontario is actively pursuing policy options that will seriously limit access to the publicly funded court system." Mr Speaker, you know as well as I do that access to a fair justice system is as important as the structure of that justice system is in and of itself. That's Chief Justice McMurtry raising that concern. In fact, the month before, Chief Justice Roy McMurtry, who was then the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court (General Division), wrote a letter with two other top judges urging Attorney General Charles Harnick to place a moratorium on cutbacks until the impact could be fully understood.

Exactly what is it they're speaking of? First of all, in the case of the police, they immediately felt the impact of the cuts to municipalities and regions through the transfer payments — a 48% cut in transfer payments. The police association felt the impact of that, because it's the local police services boards, through the taxation powers of the regional municipal governments, that were having their

police budgets cut. It's not a wonder the police were asking what happened to their guarantee, what happened to the guarantee in the Common Sense Revolution that funding would be there for police and law enforcement.

They further felt betrayed under the omnibus Bill 26. I was there when they made their presentation in Hamilton. The room was full, packed with police officers who were outraged at the betrayal of this government by the measures contained in Bill 26 in terms of what was being taken away from them, and with no consultation even. On a related matter, the firefighters felt the same way. That's the record of this government as it relates to the funding of police services in this province, and this government's commitment to support police when they took away rights that police associations and the officers they represent had in Bill 26.

1610

What about the court system? What happened to the guarantee in the Common Sense Revolution in terms of funding for the court system? Well, we've already seen approximately \$116 million in cuts to the Attorney General's ministry operating budget.

Is it any wonder that the Chief Justice spoke out? I don't need to tell members of this House that chief justices do not speak out on public matters unless they feel they have absolutely no alternative because that's not the way they operate. Yet they have a responsibility to the public and to the justice system and they feel that responsibility. This is an honourable Chief Justice, a former minister of the crown, who felt that he had no option but to stand up and speak out and defend the court system that he was charged with managing, an incredible thing for a Chief Justice to do. And yet in the face of this government breaking its promises, cutting funding to law enforcement, to the court system, what choice did they have? They would be shirking their responsibilities to the people of Ontario if they didn't speak out.

The police association had every right and responsibility to speak out when they felt betrayed by this government, which is exactly the way they felt, and for good reason. They were betrayed.

That \$116 million has shown itself in delays in the issuing and entering of judgements and court orders. There are concerns around courtroom security. They've laid off file clerks; that has created more delays. The current Attorney General said in his response to the previous speaker that I believe 1.2 million charges every year are processed through the court system.

The Attorney General has spoken out many times about the need to find ways to take issues out of the court system that don't jeopardize public safety and community safety but to try and make the system work better because of the backlogs and the delays. Fine, fine words, but the actions of this government say a very different story.

There are a number of things that this government is doing that are loading even more into the court system. In addition to the cuts and the betrayal to the police, this government has cut the ability of the poorest people in Ontario to have access to significant parts of the justice system by hacking away at the legal aid system. They are cutting in the education system. They're cutting in the health care system. They're cutting in social services.

They took away 22% of the income of the poorest of the poor.

It doesn't take a sociologist to understand that those kinds of attacks on the structure and foundation of what makes Ontario the great place that it is to live is going to lead to problems in our communities. There's a generation out there that is facing a bleak future and this government is doing nothing to help them. In fact, everything they're doing is going to harm the ability of our young people to be positive contributors to our society. So we know, the studies are there, that a lot of those young people unfortunately are going to find themselves in the court system and they will progress as young offenders to becoming adult offenders.

Let me say parenthetically that the changes that the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services has made by cutting out halfway houses, slashing of programs — the whole approach of this government to youth crime is not going to help the problem. It'll sound good on a bumper sticker, but people who know and are experts in the field will tell you that it's going to do a lot of damage. All of this is going to funnel and find its way into the court system and it's going to require the police to be doing more and more in our communities.

They're also passing legislation that's taking away rights of workers and telling those workers, "You no longer have your rights protected in law." I use as an example the changes to the Employment Standards Act. Employment standards officers will no longer be enforcing the right of a worker to get back money they're owed from a bad boss if it's over \$10,000. The answer is, "Go to the court system."

The minister made the case that while these are mostly wealthy executives and that's how they get to be high numbers, we heard in the public hearings that's not the case. Many of them are people who are working for not much more than minimum wage, but it's the length of time they've been ripped off by bad bosses that generates the money to a tune of \$10,000. This government's answer to those people isn't: "Yes, we're going to help you. Yes, we're going to be there to make sure that you get your money back when you're ripped off." No, their answer is, "Go to the court system."

This is at the same time that the Attorney General is saying that he wants to try to make the system more streamlined and take issues that shouldn't be there out of the system. They already had these cases that weren't in the system and this government's feeding into that court system issues that don't need to be there. They're going to do the same thing with a minimum amount of money in terms of a worker being ripped off. What's that limit going to be, Speaker? I'd like you to stand on your feet if you know and tell me as a member of that caucus, because we don't know. All we know is that the government's going to give itself the right to set that limit. If they set it at 200 bucks and you're only ripped off for 100 bucks — and I'll tell you, 100 bucks is a lot of money for someone making minimum wage — do you know what this government says? It used to say: "Yes, we'll go in there and fight and get that money back. We'll be there for you because you're the most vulnerable in this society." Their answer is, "Go to court."

Hon Mr Harnick: What are you talking about?

Mr Christopherson: The Attorney General scrunches up his face and asks, what am I talking about? I don't know where he sits at the cabinet table in relation to the Minister of Labour, but he ought to talk to her because that's exactly what she's doing. She is changing the law so that those people can only get the money back if they go to court. Who's going to go to court for \$100 when it costs you \$65 just to file the papers?

That's exactly what you're doing. That's exactly what your government is doing with this legislation. It's right there in the law. In fact, the only reason the people of Ontario know that's the case is because we forced this government to take that bill out across the province for four weeks, and under the glare of public scrutiny it became very clear that while they were taking away those workers' rights they were telling them their answer now is to be found going into the court system.

That is what the law will do if it's left in its current form. That's the hypocrisy of the notion that this government stands for law and order, stands for helping the police, stands for improving, and not just does it stand for these things, but more than anybody else. Nobody else cares about law enforcement and community safety like they do. Sure, because look at their promise. It's written down, must be true, except when you ask the Chief Justice what he thinks, except when you ask the police association what it thinks, especially when you ask the labour movement and the most vulnerable workers in this province what they think. They'll all tell you a very different story about this government's view of law enforcement.

1620

It needs to be asked: Why are they breaking that promise? They're breaking that promise because the Attorney General, just like the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education and the Solicitor General and the Minister of Labour, has to find his quota, his share of the cost of giving the most wealthy in this province a 30% tax cut. That's why there was \$116 million cut from the court system, not because I think this Attorney General particularly wanted to. I know the honourable member from the last Parliament and I think him to be an honourable individual. But I think he's breaking their promise and their commitment to the people of Ontario in terms of funding for courts and police and community safety, and he's doing it because he had to find his share of the \$8 billion in cuts, the largest part of which is necessary to pay for that 30% tax cut.

More and more people are saying to themselves: "I keep hearing about this tax cut and I keep seeing hospitals closing in my community and I see what's happening in my education system. Everywhere I turn there are layoffs and cuts and privatization. Yet the benefit's supposed to be this tax cut. I saw a couple of bucks in my paycheque, but it's sure not worth what's happening, not when I look at all the things that are being taken away from me as an average working middle-class family, and when I take a look at what's happening to environmental protection, when I look at the whole agenda. All of that is not worth two, five, 10, 15 bucks a week, not when my brother and husband" — or wife or son — "just got laid off from a decent-paying job

because there's a hospital closure or because there are people being laid off from the education system."

When they start looking at the price that's being paid for that tax cut, they're saying to themselves, "I'm not so sure I'm winning in this deal."

But I can assure you, for those people who can afford the best lawyers, for those people who can afford the best education, for those who can afford whatever it is this government takes away from the public sector, they're doing quite well with this tax cut, thank you very much, because they're getting \$5,000, \$7,000, \$10,000 a year. That's decent coin; that's a substantial amount of money. Quite frankly, if everybody was getting that kind of money there wouldn't be the viewpoint there is. But there aren't that many people getting that much money, just your rich friends. Most working people are lucky to get a few bucks, and the poorest of the poor are getting none of it. In fact, the poorest of the poor are getting over 20% less to pay for that.

You are prepared to cut funding to the court system and to cut funding to police to pay for this tax cut. That's why you've got people like the Chief Justice speaking out and why you've got the police association speaking out.

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: You can see we finally woke them up. We must have touched some nerves out there when they realized they can't leave that kind of explanation, that kind of insight, that kind of truth out there without challenging it with more of their simplistic Orwellian doubletalk.

That's why they all cranked up in the last few minutes. I'm glad I was able to wake them up. I think I've served a public good by doing at least that. Unfortunately, unlike the election for Speaker, there are not enough opportunities for those who know that what I'm saying is the reality. They can't do anything about it, so they follow lockstep behind the Premier and the cabinet, blindly walking down a road that, if it were just a political debate, I would find quite engaging and amusing. But the reality is that you're hurting people.

I'll wrap up my remarks saying again that because you're continuing the work that we started and Bill 79 is a bill that will help, we'll make some amendments in committee and we will continue to support this if you stay on the course where you're going to be doing good things and making real improvements. But we will not let you off the hook for the damage that you're doing to the rest of the justice system. It can't be separated. I hope that people like Chief Justice McMurtry and the police association are prepared to step forward when indeed you do break your promise on community safety and law and order, because that's what you have done. You've broken your promise and you've been called on it by people who expected you to keep that promise.

With that, I would only end my remarks by asking this government to truly start listening to the people who are being hurt by your measures. I look in the faces of the members across from me, and you can see that they just don't believe it. They're talking to people who haven't been hurt or they're talking to their rich friends who will never be hurt or they're not talking to anyone and they're like the Minister of Labour, who hides in her bunker and never comes out.

I'm not sure, but if you really took a chance and listened to the people you have hurt, then I think there are a lot of members of this government who might start to feel a little bit differently about this agenda and about the harm that it's doing to the average working middle-class families in this province, because that's still the majority and you still need them at the end of the day for any kind of re-election hope you may still think is there.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Hon Mr Harnick: You know, over a period of time, some people just don't get it. They just don't get the fact that after you've been a minister of the crown in a government that ran up \$100 billion worth of debt in this province, that ran the deficit — at one point it was even reputed to be up to \$18 billion; it settled back down on an annual basis at \$12 billion. There was an attempt by the former government to spend its way out of a recession. You know what they did? What they did was they prevented any ability for people to find jobs. As a matter of fact, after five years of that member's party's government, on which he served, there was a negative number of jobs created, many thousands fewer jobs than there were before.

When I listen to the member talk about how important it is to look after the working-class people of this province, the best thing that a working person, any working person, has is a job. They did everything they could while they were the government to make sure that all of the investment left the province, the ability to create jobs left the province. The people they purport to represent in their attempt to create a class warfare in Ontario couldn't get jobs because of their economic policies. They forget the situation that they left this province in. That record will live in history as the darkest time in the history of this province, because working people had no security, they had no jobs, they had no hope, they had no opportunity. That's the position they left the government in when they left.

When I listen to this member talk about these things, it appals me. He forgets where he's been and he forgets where we now have to be going. We have to create jobs, hope and opportunity. We've so far created 150,000 jobs. That's where real security is.

1630

Mr Bradley: I thought the member for Hamilton Centre made some good sense on many of the points that he made during his speech. The latest contribution by the Attorney General seems to be a bit off topic, but you've been very liberal in your interpretation of that, so I'll be perhaps looking at the periphery of this issue as well.

I'll get the Solicitor General of days gone by to comment on this. He will remember well that the members of the government, including the present Attorney General and the present Solicitor General, pointed fingers across the floor and mentioned that the government was being soft on crime because somehow it wasn't providing the resources — the necessary police resources, the necessary prosecuting resources, the necessary resources for courts — to be able to deal with matters in the justice system. I know it must gall him to be criticized today by a government which has made those significant cuts. There's a denial of that, but I think the Attorney General

is probably receiving wrong information from those who are supplying the information to him because I know he wouldn't personally want to state facts to the House that would not be true. So I know it must be misinformation that's making its way to the front of his desk.

What we are seeing, as the member I think has appropriately pointed out, are significant cutbacks. You can't have it both ways. You can't say, "We're against crime. We're for law and order in this province," and then cut the number of police officers, for instance in Toronto, by hundreds upon hundreds of people, or cut the number of prosecutors that are there on a permanent basis, or cut the resources available to courts and still make that claim. I think the member appropriately pointed that out to members of this House.

Mrs Boyd: I certainly agree with my colleague from Hamilton Centre that there is a real reality in terms of the difference between the talk of this government prior to and since the election around law-and-order issues. We all received copies of the business plan of the Ministry of the Attorney General and we all have the detailed analysis of what that means in terms of personnel and in terms of administration of the courts and so on. The minister is unwise to suggest that there are not hundreds of people being laid off in the Ministry of the Attorney General; there are. Two hundred and ninety people have been laid off in the family support plan. There are many in the courts administration area who will be laid off. The ministry has fairly grandiose plans around privatizing many of its functions, which it says it can pay for out of the savings through the case management system it is putting in place under this bill.

I would just caution the Attorney General when he speaks to remember that it is a historical reality that many ministries tell ministers, "If we do this particular form of streamlining, we will save these numbers of dollars," and then propose five or six different ways in which those same dollars can be spent. It seems to me that the Attorney General would do well to listen to the cautions of his colleagues within this House that the savings that will accrue — and they will accrue — from the kind of case management system that he is talking about already, as my count goes, between the changes in technology, between the changes in other capital costs, between many of the changes of the costly case management masters, and they will cost money, those dollars are going to be spent many times over. The Attorney General would be wise to be very cautious.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I also want to commend the member from Hamilton for his speech this afternoon. I certainly thought, as I listened to him tell of his understanding and experience and knowledge of this subject, that he was painting a picture that all of us need painted. The context within which everything in this government unfolds is a context of cuts and a diminishing of our ability to continue to deliver services in this province in a way that we've come to expect and to accept as the norm.

This piece of legislation is no different than everything else the government has delivered so far. It's something positive in the middle of a whole bunch of negative. It's like a smokescreen. On one hand you say, "Here's something we think will be good for people," and in fact

is good for people, will be good for the system. But when you put it in the context of everything else they're doing, it just doesn't balance out. In the end, even though in this instance they're going to be doing something that we as a party can support, at the end of the day the whole justice system will not be well served and this government will not live up to the promises that it made in the Common Sense Revolution and in the talk that they deliver out there to the people of Ontario and in this place.

For the member from Hamilton to get up and say what he did in such an eloquent and passionate way serves the process here of debate very, very well and I'm sure will be much appreciated by people out there who are trying desperately to put some sense to what it is that this government is doing, to try and put the pieces together so that at the end of the day they have the full picture because the group across the way I don't think still fully understand what the full picture is. I don't think they know at the end of the day what the result is going to be. I'm telling you that it won't be good news.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Hamilton Centre can take two minutes to wrap up.

Mr Christopherson: I want to thank my colleagues, the members for St Catharines, London Centre and Sault Ste Marie, for their kind remarks and their supportive comments.

I want to reserve the majority of my response to the comments of the member for Willowdale, the current Attorney General. I wrote down that he said I don't get it. I find it quite interesting that in his entire two-minute diatribe, a responding diatribe to be fair, he didn't once defend what I accused him of doing.

He talked about jobs, and I'm going to preserve a little bit of the two minutes that I have to comment on that, but it's important to note that he did not defend himself against the charges and allegations I made in terms of the promises that were broken, the effect on the majority of people of Ontario and the ultimate impact on the most vulnerable and on our children and what's going to happen to law and order and public safety as a result of their measures. He didn't comment one word on any of that.

He went on and talked about the fact that it's best if somebody has a job. Well, what kind of job? This government is so keen on privatizing that every opportunity they have to kill decent paying jobs in this province, they're going to go for it. They like the idea of minimum wage jobs. They like jobs that compete with the southern United States, the right-to-work states, Mexico and other Third World nations. That's the way they want to compete and it's the workers out there who are going to pay for that at the same time that corporate profits are going through the roof.

He talked about investment leaving the province under us. After our Bill 40 in 1994, we had the historic level of \$8 billion invested in the manufacturing sector, the highest level in the history of Ontario. More nonsense coming from this government.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Crozier: It's my pleasure to make some comments today on Bill 79, the Courts Improvement Act. I might say at the outset that, generally speaking, we want to

support any bill that will reduce public confusion about the courts, that will make the courts more efficient and that, in the end, will be better for the citizens of the province of Ontario. Speaker, with your indulgence, it would be interesting for me today to know how many lawyers there are sitting in the House at the present time. Who around would want to identify themselves as a lawyer?

Interjections.

Mr Crozier: At least somebody will admit to it. The reason I say that is that it is obvious I'm speaking from a layman's point of view. In the last three or four minutes it seems to me that we've gotten into rather an economic discussion. I feel much more comfortable in an economic discussion, but I know that if I went on with that discussion, you might bring me back to the bill at hand, and rightly so.

I'd like to begin by giving a little bit of background because a lot has been said today about courts being confusing. Certainly I, for one, would agree that the general public, the vast majority of us who have never been in a court before, find them confusing, intimidating and costly. If we can do anything at all to make them less confusing, less intimidating and certainly less costly, as I said at the outset, we'd be pleased to support that.

1640

As you know, probably even with a traffic ticket, when you turn it over and it says you can plead guilty or you can appear in court on a certain date, I think what most people do, depending on the amount of the fine and the type of offence, if it's a lesser fine and a lesser offence, is they probably just simply sign the ticket and send it off because they know it's going to be an expensive process to defend themselves, albeit I understand on occasion some people act as their own lawyer. It seems to me there's some saying about someone who acts as their own lawyer acts for a fool or some such thing as that. The first thing you want to do is go and talk to a lawyer, of course. Unless you happen to have a lawyer as a very close friend, that advice is going to cost you some money. Let's, then, assume that very few of those people have access to the court system.

Late this summer, this bill was tabled, Bill 79, the Courts Improvement Act. It's my understanding that it has four main components or purposes: (1) to amend the Courts of Justice Act to permit the appointment of case management masters; (2) to amend the Courts of Justice Act to change the names of Ontario courts; (3) to give power to make regulations under the Charities Accounting Act to the Attorney General, acting on the recommendation of the public guardian or the public trustee; and (4) to make housekeeping and minor amendments to the Courts of Justice Act and the Children's Law Reform Act.

I'm always a bit leery when it says, "to make housekeeping and minor amendments," because, as my colleague the member for Renfrew North said earlier today, and I commented on his speech, it's often those little parts of a bill that those of us who are not familiar with law find are either the most interesting or are the ones that have a great effect on our lives and we don't realize it until some time later.

In any event, on the same date that the bill was introduced to the Legislature, outside the House the Attorney General announced that six civil court sites in Toronto would be consolidated at a new court at 393 University Avenue and that a new facility is under construction. There will be 23 courtrooms, and they're expected to be completed this month. I hope that those renovations are on track, because as we have heard today, we all understand the need for some improvement in the physical facilities of our courts. As well, two new courtrooms will be added to the existing courtrooms at the 361 University Avenue courthouse, and renovations on those are expected to be completed around December.

The total cost of all these renovations is supposed to be in the area of \$11.5 million. In view of the other areas in our court system where funds have been restricted, some being in the areas of personnel, I hope and I trust that this \$11.5 million that we're spending on fixed assets will be money well spent, because we all know, and even the Attorney General and others might agree, that our court system, in order to function properly and perhaps even improve it, would need even more money. We'd all like to do that, but we understand the fiscal constraints that we're under these days.

Because there may be some watching today who are not familiar with the background that leads up to changes that are recommended in this bill, people might want to know what the background is that led up to this and why it is we feel we need them. In 1989, Attorney General Ian Scott announced a plan that was based on a 1987 report of Mr Justice Zuber, to reform the trial court system in Ontario. These changes were designed to address public dissatisfaction with the existing court system. At the time, the trial court structure consisted of eight different trial courts divided into roughly three hierarchical levels. One of the key components of the plan at that time was the creation of a single court. I certainly would agree that when you take eight different trial courts divided into three different sections, a move to make them into a single court would certainly be a great step towards that objective of making our courts simpler, less confusing, easier to understand.

Court reform was seen as leading to a simpler, more efficient, less expensive, cooperatively managed trial court system. There in a sentence is the objective of any Attorney General, of any Legislature, of any court system; that is, that it be a simpler, more efficient, less expensive and cooperatively managed system.

Phase 1 of court reform came into effect in September 1990. It established a court called the Ontario Court of Justice. This court was divided into two divisions: the Ontario Court (General Division), which consisted of what had previously been the High Court, the district court and the surrogate court; and the Ontario Court (Provincial Division), which continued the existing jurisdiction of the old provincial court. The General Division hears civil law cases, serious criminal cases and all jury trials. The Provincial Division deals with most criminal trials and preliminary hearings. Family law disputes are heard at both levels. I would suspect that most people in the province, if they've had any connection with a court at all, would be most familiar with the General Division, which hears civil law cases.

Phase 2 of court reform would have — and I emphasize “would have” — merged the General and Provincial divisions of the Ontario Court of Justice into a unified, one-level trial court with only three divisions — criminal, civil and family — again easier for us to understand. Those of us who are laypeople can picture in our minds what a criminal court would require, what a civil court might handle and certainly what a family court might handle. In addition, the appeal court structure was going to be reformed. The total cost of the reform at that time was estimated to be about \$16 million over three years.

The dedication of judicial and administrative resources to the resolution of the criminal court backlog problem, which we have all heard about for a number of years, was combined with the failure of the NDP to raise the Small Claims Court maximum enough to keep pace with inflation. I might say at this time that when I say the NDP, it just happened to be during their jurisdiction. At that time, in the early 1990s —

Mrs Boyd: We tripled it.

Mr Crozier: What's the amount now?

Mrs Boyd: It's \$6,000.

Mr Crozier: I was going to say that I can remember when I was in small business — and perhaps you could too, Speaker — that the limits hadn't been changed for a number of years and were simply too low. If the limits are too low, then you have to go to a higher court. You generally involve lawyers. The cost of the court and the cost of the lawyers add up so quickly that sometimes it wasn't even worth taking the debtor to Small Claims Court.

1650

I can recall a little story that I'll tell you about Small Claims Court. I won't name the parties involved because it's not important, but it gives you an indication of the atmosphere in Small Claims Court as opposed to what I would call an official court situation, and that was that I had, in my business before, taken a debtor to court. The situation was that someone had purchased some material under a family member's account. In most cases in a small town you don't question if a son, daughter, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, whatever, comes in and purchases material. You think nothing of it. But in this case it ended up that the bill was unpaid.

I went to Small Claims Court, not experienced as a lawyer, and stated the case that this material had been purchased, I thought in good faith, but remained unpaid. The judge in this case — again, it was a small town — was somebody who was known by both me, as the plaintiff, and the defendant. After listening to the defendant, the judge almost in a fatherly way said to this defendant, “Did you use the material?” Yes, he did. “Well, don't you think then that really any honourable person would pay this?” Then the judge said, as part of it, “Albeit the price was too high,” and looked at me with a wink. So I got the message that he was having fun with me but he also was able to get it across to the defendant it was the honourable thing to do.

Small Claims Court was, as I said, a much more relaxed atmosphere. I certainly went back to our business and reviewed our prices, but we couldn't change them. I

just thought I'd add that as a little story that might help some of us understand the court system.

Back to Bill 79, the legislation at hand: The key elements of Bill 79, I feel, are the changes that it makes to the Courts of Justice Act. There are two major changes. The rationale for these amendments is to speed up the civil courts and allow them to provide more affordable and accessible service to the public. The key elements are as follows.

Case management masters: I had to do a little bit of research to understand what case management masters are, and after having done that research, I think if these are brought in and if they are managed properly they certainly should help the system.

Bill 79 creates the position of case management master in Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor. What these are for, more for the information of those who may be watching, they're intended to support judges in managing the civil caseload by hearing motions, presiding at pre-trial and settlement conferences and controlling the time lines of the cases. Certainly if the time lines of cases can be reduced, if cases can be handled more quickly, I think we're all in favour of that. As a matter of fact, if there can be settlement before these cases go to court, I think that's even better.

Essentially, the masters support the judges by handling these preliminary and interim matters and disputes, all of which we know are time-consuming. The masters were originally phased out under phase 1 of the court reform that I spoke about earlier but are now being resurrected by the government within a case management framework and will supposedly allow them to ensure that disputes get to trial or are settled within a reasonable period of time.

Within such a framework, if a case does not proceed within a reasonable period of time, it will be dismissed. Again, we've heard a lot of rhetoric — maybe not even just rhetoric; a lot of serious discussion about cases being dismissed, and the general public can't understand this. In particular we're advised of those higher-profile, more serious criminal cases and we can't understand why they're dismissed just because the courts couldn't handle them in time. I suspect, although I don't know, all governments, that this has been happening for a number of years, that these cases have built up, time lines have been exceeded and therefore serious cases have been dismissed. Creation of these masters follows the recommendations of the 1995 report of the Civil Justice Review calling for the establishment of a case management framework that is properly resourced, and I think that's important, and effectively planned.

So far three Ontario case management projects, in Windsor, Sault Ste Marie and Toronto, have already been established with what I am told are mixed results. It's likely that these new masters will eventually form the backbone of a province-wide case management system.

Subsection 1(17) of the bill amends the Courts of Justice Act to provide that case management masters shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor “on the recommendation of the Attorney General.” In order to be appointed a case management master, a person must be a member of a provincial or territorial bar for a set period of time to be specified in the regulations.

A case management master holds office for a period of seven years, and the amendments allow for unlimited reappointments for three years at a time, subject to the requirement that case managers retire at age 65. The jurisdiction of case management masters is to be conferred by the rules of the court rather than by statute, and case management masters will be prohibited from acting as arbitrators, adjudicators, referees, conciliators or mediators without authorization unless the rules of the court require participation in alternative dispute resolutions.

I think all of us who are laypeople can understand that case management masters should have experience; therefore, having been a member of a provincial or territorial bar for a period of time, because obviously they can best understand, in most cases, the needs of the court. I hope that these case management masters will not merely be places for political parties to place their friends. I hope, believe and trust that they will be well-qualified people and that we will, in those cases, only accept the most qualified.

Under subsection 1(17) as well, complaints against case management masters will be handled by the Chief Justice, who will appoint a committee to investigate and report and will have the power to dismiss the complaint or impose one of a set of specified sanctions.

On a lighter note, I hope these committees which are used by the Chief Justice will also be effective. Oftentimes committees are made fun of because we find that things aren't always done in a timely fashion by them. I hope this will help to speed things along. According to the ministry this process, to which the rules governing administrative processes will not apply — for example, there is the Statutory Powers Procedure Act — is expected to be simpler and less costly than the full complaints procedure used for provincial judges.

You've noted throughout that in looking at this bill I've suggested or at least found that in many cases what's being changed is so that it can be simpler and therefore I think more timely and certainly less costly.

1700

Pursuant to subsection 1(14) of the bill, case management masters are like judges: They're immune from civil liability. I suppose if I were a lawyer I would better understand why the case management masters should be immune from civil liability. Perhaps someone in their response will be able to explain to me why that's necessary, because I'm always just a little nervous when someone is stated to be immune from something for a decision they've made, although I even understand that there are things that we do within this Legislature, things that we say, for which we are immune. I guess, when used properly, that has to be there, because sometimes we may not be able to speak out on issues and say things within reason, within the Speaker's judgement, that we would always like to say.

I want to point out again that these case management masters must be knowledgeable, experienced people, because they will be immune from civil liability. Pursuant to subsections 1(1) and (2) of the bill, appeals from the decisions of case management masters will go to the Ontario Court (General Division), as it is currently known.

Consequential amendments have been made to certain other acts, including the Construction Lien Act, the Evidence Act, the freedom of information act and the Law Society Act in order to reflect and incorporate the new case management masters.

In the brief time I have left, I'd like to address the issue of court name change. I'm not sure how important this area is, but it's my understanding that it's going to cost some money, so I hope this is not just window dressing when it comes to name changes. Bill 79 makes changes to the names of the Ontario courts, this for the second time in six years. Essentially, the Ontario Court (General Division) will now be known as the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court (Provincial Division) will now be known as the Ontario Court of Justice.

All judges in both courts will now be known as Mr or Madam Justice, and my colleague the member for Renfrew North had a considerable amount to say on that earlier. Previously, Provincial Court judges were known only as "Your Honour." The official explanation for this change is that the current names of the courts are confusing to the public, as the final merger of the two courts planned under a previous government's court reform has not occurred. Ontario judges have reportedly also repeatedly requested that the name be changed.

I don't know that this name change will clear up any of the confusion of those of us who are out on the street and hope that we never have to go to court. I guess, if need be, I could always go to my lawyer and have him or her explain the difference in the courts and, I suppose, only hope that if I ever had to go to court at that time, it would be in one of the lesser courts. In any event, we're going to change court names.

There have been press reports that I will refer to that indicate this change has been prompted by veteran judges from the General Division who were annoyed that their court was merged with a lower court in 1990, thus diminishing their stature. I don't know about that. I've always held judges in the highest of esteem and I can only comment that this has been reported in the press.

Press reports also indicate that the government hopes to placate provincial judges by calling them justices, a more prestigious title than judge, thus diffusing any objection to the changes on their part. Speaker, like your position, I treat it with respect and honour, and if this will go some way towards making the position of what was formerly a judge more prestigious in being called a justice, then so be it.

But my point here is that the cost of changing the names of courts has been estimated at \$2.5 million. There was a report in the Toronto Star that the ministry will not be spending any money on changes for forms or letterhead or changing the signs of each of the province's 160 courts. Other press reports said that the ministry is planning to use up all the court letterhead and filing forms before the new supplies are ordered and that no signs will be changed.

Well, if we're going to make it less confusing and we're going to change the names now, but we're still going to call them the old name or at least the signs are going to be the old ones and the letterhead is going to be old, I suggest that may even be more confusing than it is

now. On the other hand, I can't fault the government for wanting to use up the paper. Perhaps they could get all that letterhead in and, if there were blank sides to it, we could print things on the other side for all this paper that flows through the Legislature.

It's clear, however, that this name change will at minimum require the replacement over a period of time of hundreds of courthouse signs across the province if mass public confusion is to be avoided. The cost of replacing only one sign, we're told, on each of the 160 courthouses in the province has been estimated at — if you can believe this, and this was in the *Toronto Star* on July 10, 1996, so I believe it — between \$160,000 and \$800,000. If not changed, as I've pointed out, the existing signs could last another 20 years before wearing out. That would add to the confusion that I'm not even sure is there now, because we always go to a lawyer to straighten it out for us. Without the new signs and letterhead, the court name change would seem to be completely futile and pointless, as the public will remain unaware of the new names. I think we have a little bit of a dilemma here if we're not going to spend some money on it.

That's about all I would like to cover today: the court name change and the confusion that it will hopefully save us; the court masters who will help move the system along. Truly, I hope that this does in the end make our courts more timely, that it's simpler and easier for us who are not in the legal field to understand, and that it will, in doing that, be at least less costly, if not any more.

Thank you for your indulgence, Speaker, and for those in the Legislature for some comments from a layperson.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mrs Boyd: I'd like to congratulate the member on his speech and point out that exactly the fact that he is a layperson and is struggling to understand how the justice system works is a very important point indeed. One of the problems faced by us in this province — frankly, in this country — is that there is a general public lack of understanding around how the court system works, what the process is, who the various players are and what the public accountability is of the justice system.

For a member who is a layperson to outline some of the questions that he has about the justice system points out to us the necessity to follow the recommendations that are in the Civil Justice Review, on which this bill is largely based, to really improve public education around how the court system works, how best to access the court system, exactly what the process is and exactly how public accountability can be assured within the system.

The member very rightly pointed out that this is a lack for most people. One of the things we know is that it is important for us to understand what our rights are and how our system works if we are to be able to exercise our rights to be treated equally before and under the law.

1710

It is my belief that the current act and the way in which the system is to be structured, the way in which cases are to be moved along under the case management system will permit a better opportunity for the general layperson involved in court action to have a sense of what the deadlines are, what the time lines are, who does what in the courts, so that they can feel as though they

have more confidence in their knowledge about how the system works.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Essex South, to wrap up.

Mr Crozier: Thank you, Speaker and my colleagues here. I think you've been rather easy on me today. As was just said, I appreciate those comments because it is difficult for most of us to understand the court system, and yet in a democracy such as ours, we want to be able to depend on the courts. For most of us the courts should be, along with other law enforcement functions, a comfort to us. They should be a support to most of the citizens of Ontario.

I will only end by saying and re-emphasizing that the courts also have to be accessible to the average person when necessary, and by "accessible" I mean the system has to be efficient and less costly perhaps than it's been in the past. To those ends, we will be supporting this bill.

I understand that it's going to committee and that in those areas where we've raised questions, we'll be able to make amendments. I'm sure government will be open to those amendments that will make even further improvements.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): I am pleased to speak on this bill, the Courts Improvement Act, and want to begin by saying that my colleague from London Centre yesterday did a tremendous job, a thorough job of scrutinizing what's in the bill, offering her long years of experience in community involvement, but also as a former Attorney General who got very actively involved in the work that she was doing and was able therefore to offer many positive suggestions about what they have done, that we began to do during our tenure and certainly under the tenure of my colleague from London Centre, and offered some other areas of criticism in terms of what else needed to be done.

In these debates it is always important to have members who take the time, the interest and the care to provide useful input that will make a particular bill much more effective for all of us, because we're all affected by the court system, whether we be judges, lawyers, victims or anybody who is affected by a particular problem that lands you in the court system.

I wanted to make those comments because often we don't do a very good job of taking the time and making those very concrete, positive suggestions. So I wanted to say that.

I have two or three areas of interest of mine as it relates to this particular bill that I want to speak to, and one of them is on the whole matter of the case management masters. This bill creates the position of case management masters. As some have pointed out, case management masters will support judges in managing the civil caseload by hearing motions, presiding at pre-trials and controlling time lines of cases. I believe that is obviously an important function. Others have spoken to this and I believe that many believe it is an important function to build into this particular bill.

Where we have a concern is around the whole issue of how we make the appointments. These appointments are going to be for seven-year terms of office, with unlimited

three-year renewal. We have no quarrel with that. We think that's an appropriate thing to do. The problem is not in the fact that we make them long-term but how we make those appointments — that concerns me a great deal — and the way it's structured is that the Attorney General makes those appointments.

Why do I worry about this? I want to tell you what some people who were in government prior to this election, who have very good experience with what the members of the opposition, Conservative members, used to say then in the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions.

When I was in that committee, chairing it for a while or popping in every now and then when needed or when I was interested in some of the appointments, many of the Conservative members were only interested in weeding out those we had appointed who were NDP-affiliated, somewhat affiliated, somewhat connected to the New Democratic Party, therefore they scrutinized those members in such a political way that it bothered many of us.

Why did it bother me? It bothered me because we made many appointments that were not politically connected, who were not NDPers and may have been Liberal-affiliated and Conservative-affiliated members. We did that. In fact, my only worry is that we appointed too many Liberals and too many Conservatives during our reign.

I learned from what this government is doing at the moment that we should have done more appointments that were connected to the things we believed in instead of trying to do our best to appoint people not based on their political affiliation but on their expertise. The Conservative members at the time simply took advantage of the fact that every now and then we brought over a few who were NDPers. That bothered me a great deal.

What we did or tried to do was to make a change in the appointments process that would change the system as we knew it because there was no system in the past. The Liberals had no system. I understand it was a very close-knit group of people, one or two, who made the appointments process. The Tories had no system. The only system they had was to do what they've always done: They appointed their political, Conservative, patronage friends. That was the system they had in place then.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): As opposed to hiring their enemies?

Mr Marchese: As opposed to, Mr Gilchrist, doing what we did. Allow me to explain it so it's clear to you. We established a standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions. It allowed you, the critics then, Conservatives and Liberals, to bring forth people and ask them questions about their credentials, their expertise, their knowledge of the field and their political affiliation. You took advantage of that, because the first questions your colleagues asked in that committee were: "Are you an NDPer? Do you have an NDP membership?" That was always the first question. That's what they looked at. It didn't matter to them that the people we were appointing had the expertise. It was irrelevant to them. What was relevant was the fact that some of them may have been connected to our party.

At least in our process, where we created a process, we allowed you the possibility to comment and even hammer away at the government for that 5% or 7% of all the appointments we made that were very clearly NDP-connected. The rest of them were all your friends, and I regret that. I really do. I regret that we appointed many of your friends. Why would we do that? Just to appear to be neutral, to appear to be fair. In our attempt to be fair to everybody, we designed a process that would permit many other than NDPers to be there. Why would we do that when we clearly see in your appointments process — and the Chair of the committee is here. He knows as well as other members of that committee who are here that most of the people you appoint are Tories, and you do that with a straight face.

1720

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: They can't hear you in Italian. He's speaking Italian to me, Mr Speaker, and he's distracting me. I really would like to answer back in Italian but I can't because, as you know, Italian's not permitted in this Legislative Assembly. I would like to speak in Italian.

To the member, why do I prolong this point? I prolong it because the Tories in opposition said: "We're going to be different. We are going to appoint people based on merit, not on affiliation." That's what your friends said. It's laughable. It's tragically stupid and tragically funny, but that's what they said. They said, these Tories, that they were going to be different, that the only people they were going to appoint were those who had the expertise and the knowledge in the field. Isn't it laughable, Mr Speaker? Because you know — you're on that side — that the people who have been appointed so far have been very politically connected, and you should be embarrassed. All of you should be embarrassed because you fine Tories were going to be different. But people know better.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: Where's this in the bill, Mr Speaker? I don't see this in the bill.

Mr Marchese: Mr Speaker, one of your friends says I'm not speaking to this bill. He fails to understand the connection I'm making. We're talking about case management masters. We're talking about the fact that the Attorney General at the moment, the way it's currently structured, is going to make the appointments, and he, the Attorney General, was in committee many a time in the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions where he clearly — he and Stockwell and all the others — went there to talk about the kind of political appointments we had made. So why do I worry about this? It's very connected.

Hon Mr Harnick: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to correct the record. I was never on the standing committee of agencies, boards and tribunals.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr Marchese: Mr Speaker, he will have a turn in his two-minute rebuttal. He and the Minister of Agriculture both know exactly what I'm talking about. The Minister of Agriculture says I don't know what I'm talking about, but he knows very well what I'm talking about because he's very much a part of the problem. He was there in the previous opposition party; he's not newly elected. He knows what I'm talking about. The Attorney General

knows what I'm talking about. He knows. He can deny it when he has his two-minute rebuttal, but he knows clearly what I'm talking about.

Why I am worried, speaking very clearly to this specific issue, is that he, the Attorney General, is the only one at the moment who is going to make the appointments. Now, you might believe him and all of you out there listening and your friends might say: "Oh, but don't worry. This Attorney General is very honourable. The only people he will appoint are those who clearly have the expertise, the knowledge and the interest to be there." If you believe that, then we're okay. We can all go home and we can forget about how they behaved in the past because now they're in government and the only appointments they're going to make are those who have the expertise. There's no politics in this at all, no political patronage. If you believe that, then just simply turn off the television and don't worry. But I don't believe them.

I believe what we need here is a judicial appointments advisory committee to speak to this, to advise on who the case management masters should be. Why is that important? We have a Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee for judges, and I believe that is very, very important to have. Why? Because it includes a number of judiciary folks, it includes many lawyers, it includes as well members of the public. That's important. These people in this advisory committee bring together a great deal of expertise and legal and community-based knowledge that we need. I have much more trust and faith in a judicial advisory committee recommending case management masters than I do simply leaving that job to the Attorney General; not because he's not capable, not for that, but rather because I believe that he needs the advice of an advisory committee similar to the one we have for judges. I believe it's important.

I believe he will support it in the end when we propose an amendment of this sort, because otherwise there's no scrutiny of these individuals. A judicial advisory committee provides that scrutiny. There are no job descriptions for the case management masters. A judicial advisory committee could look at that, review that and feel comfortable that in the end it made a wise decision about the people appointed. I would feel better knowing that there is such a group dealing with that issue. Remember, there are no minimum requirements for these people, so how can we feel comfortable about who is going to be appointed? Why would we leave this job simply to one individual, the Attorney General? Again, not because he may not be capable — that's not the issue — but rather to place our trust in a group of people that would have the ability to scrutinize very carefully who gets appointed.

In this regard, that's why I spend some time on this, because I believe the job of these case management masters to be important. We have to look at this. I'm hoping the Attorney General will comment, not just in terms of what we said about patronage appointments, what they said in the past and what they're doing presently, but rather address this particular component I raised, which I believe to be a very important part of what we're doing with this bill.

There is another matter I want to speak to, and that is the whole matter of a regional courts management

advisory committee. At the present moment, this committee meets at least four times a year. It is within the act that they are to meet four times a year. I believe this is an important thing to do and to continue to do. Why do I think it's important? Because these people are representatives of the public. They reflect the opinions, the feelings, the frustrations and/or knowledge and experience of the public. It's important for these people to meet on a regular basis, at least four times a year, something that should happen, because these are the people who deal with issues of backlog, these are the people who deal with issues of the physical aspect of the court in terms of how that affects the proceedings of the court, how it affects people who have to come to the court, a whole number of things that connect to the aspects of the court system.

Having public input in this particular area is important, is essential. If you simply take this requirement away from the bill, as they are doing, there is no requirement that this group meet. If there is no requirement that this group meet, we're not certain whether it will want to meet at all.

If you build it into the bill, then they are required to meet; but if you don't, my sense is that it won't happen. I'm not sure whether that's deliberate on the part of the government or not. I'm not sure whether it is that they don't want public input, public representation or the involvement of these people to address these issues because, by having such a group scrutinize the proceedings, the backlog issues, that might become a criticism of the government should it comment. Perhaps that's it. I'm not sure.

Maybe the Attorney General, in his two-minute rebuttal, will also respond to this, because I want to know whether he's trying to shut off the democratic process and to clearly shut off the voice of such a community or such a group or not. If that's not the case, what is it? Is there a reason they don't want this committee to meet a minimum of four times a year? I want to know. I hope he will respond to this.

1730

As you can see, the aspects I comment on have a lot to do with community input and community involvement, which I believe is an essential part of the democratic process. When you take those democratic processes out of this field, you're making it closed-shop. You're saying, like the Attorney General is saying: "We don't need this committee, we don't need to have a judicial advisory committee to make the appointments, because I can do it and you can trust me. You've elected me to do the job, Mike Harris has elected me to do the job, so you can trust the fact that I will do it very objectively, cleanly, fairly, to represent the interests of the community." Well, that may be, but I don't think that's a good thing. I don't think the public out there is saying: "Exclude us from this process. Don't take into account the opinions we have that might improve the court process, because we trust you to do it. That's why we elected you." I don't think that's what the public is saying or what they want.

Those are two important components of this particular bill that I want to speak to, and I will add another that I think is also very useful, and this is praise for the government in terms of what it's doing: the changes it's making

to the regulation power in the Charities Accounting Act from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Attorney General and the recommendations of the public guardian and trustee. It allows for regulations for charities to avoid the need to go to court for approval of technical breaches. This is useful, and again it connects to community involvement.

All the areas I've spoken to connect to involvement and community advice, and in this particular component it's community involvement. It's important because a number of individuals who have volunteered to sit on a number of volunteer boards, charities and the like, were very concerned about liability in the event that they said or did something that might have been possibly untoward, and there were no protections for these people. So what they have introduced here is useful and I praise it. We need ongoing community involvement in non-profits, in charities, because without them this system would collapse. Without volunteers, everything we do would collapse.

Approximately \$4 billion worth, if it were to be calculated, is being given by volunteers actually devoting their time sitting on boards, agencies and commissions where the remuneration is very small, or on non-profit groups where there is no remuneration whatsoever. Volunteers up to the present have been spending a great deal of time, energy and commitment towards making improvements, wherever they are. If we didn't initiate the change being recommended by this minister, many people would likely not want to be involved, and that's a problem.

It's certainly a problem for Tories, because they're relying a great deal on volunteers. In fact this whole province is going to be run by volunteers — and the private sector, of course, because they really believe the private sector can do the job better, irrespective of the fact that they don't care about what happens to humans. But the volunteer sector? Gee, that's a big component of what this government is doing, so I welcome this particular change and I know they needed to have this particular change, because they rely a great deal on volunteers and they're going to rely more and more on volunteers.

They have a parliamentary assistant travelling the province, I know in Sault Ste Marie — I was talking to a colleague. They're travelling all over, talking to people about volunteers and how we get more and more people to volunteer. Like I tell you, I'm not sure how they're going to do that. It's like making a stone bleed, because so many people are volunteering now that I'm not sure they can take time off work to do the job government should be doing by providing the funding for the services to be maintained in every area.

My colleague the member for Hamilton Centre talked about the Tory funding cuts, which are creating chaos in Ontario's court system. He went on at length about that. It is creating chaos in the court system because the cutbacks are always connected to people. When you fire people they're connected to services, and when the services are no longer there people are going to be very upset by that. Your volunteers are not going to be able to do the job of the people who were there in the past doing it on a paid basis, as it should be, because a lot of these things cannot be done by volunteers.

But as I say, I welcome the fact that the Attorney General has made this change in the Charities Accounting Act because I think that it was welcomed. We support it and I know the Liberals and others support this as well.

I want to comment briefly on another matter. The bill proposes that complaints against case management masters be handled in a manner similar to complaints against deputy judges, but we know that deputy judges are not full-time or long-term employees as envisioned by the act. There should be, we argue, a council for case management masters similar to deputy judge councils, and it should be responsible for approving the code of conduct proposed by the Chief Justice.

I know that my colleague the member for London Centre will be proposing that as a change too and many other recommended changes that we'll be looking at and supporting. We hope that the Attorney General will listen, from time to time, to some of the suggestions we have made. I say this sincerely. I say this because he will know that the member for London Centre, and he applauded her earlier on, has made a number of useful suggestions and recommendations that support what he has proposed here today, but she's also made a number of critical comments about other areas that need to be changed. I am hopeful and I'm assuming that with the same interest he showed in her support he will show similar support to some of the changes I have spoken to and that my colleague the member for London Centre has spoken to. I'm convinced he will listen to that.

The three areas again are: Please don't make the appointments a political matter. Do yourself a favour and make sure that the case management masters go through a judicial advisory committee because then you will get our support for that. You will get the support and trust of the public, who will know that there will be no political patronage involved, that you are only interested in making sure you have the best advice from an advisory committee that will bring expertise from the legal field and expertise and knowledge from community people.

Then he can free himself from any attack that I certainly am waging against him and his government on the whole matter of political patronage. He will be doing himself a favour by doing that. There's absolutely no political advantage to allowing himself that particular privilege of appointing people — no political advantage whatsoever. I see this as something that will help him and his government in appointing a judicial advisory committee.

On the whole matter of regional court management advisory committees, I argue, keep the system as it is because it will allow these committees to meet and to talk about the matter of backlog and the whole matter of the physical aspects of the court. We need that input. I think the minister needs that input. If he doesn't want that input, people like me, and others, in this House and outside this House, will say, as I have said, that they do not want to hear from the regional court management advisory committee, which is largely a community-based group. If he doesn't do that, he's telling me he doesn't want to hear from them. So I say keep this committee; keep the current structure which allows them to meet four times a year. There is no political advantage in eliminating that whatsoever — none.

1740

Perhaps in his two-minute rebuttal he can comment on the patronage issue and free himself on that, and he can comment on this issue about not allowing this committee to meet four times a year. I hope on this front, the Attorney General will have some useful feedback to me as it relates to three or four of the matters that I've raised.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr Bradley: I'm glad the member mentioned the political patronage system that used to dominate the court system in years gone by at both the federal and provincial level and how there's been a move away from that. I think while there have been many good people appointed to the bench and to other positions within the legal profession who in fact may be characterized as patronage appointments — many of those people have been very capable individuals in any event — the best way of handling a system of justice in the province or federally is to have appointments which are recognized by an independent body as being non-political.

That doesn't mean that people who have served in political office or may be associated with one of the political parties in this province should be precluded from holding a position in the courts or in the court system, but it does mean that a more objective group will be able to make recommendations so that the people we have on the bench and in other positions are indeed selected as being capable people and receive some widespread support.

I know it's attractive. Each one of us, as we get into power, probably have people whom we know who hope they might be appointed to the bench for one reason or other. I have seen that in years gone by. I'm sure there are many, with the Conservatives returning to power now, who will be looking for that to happen.

The more we depoliticize the system, the better off we will be, and I think that movement towards doing so is a movement which is to be commended. I think the member for Fort York was pointing to the attributes of such a system that we hope will be continued well into the future.

Mrs Boyd: I certainly agree that the points made by the member for Fort York around having appointments to the case management masters made by the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee are very well taken.

I'd like to quote from Hansard, June 20, 1994. The now Attorney General, in talking about the amendments to the Courts of Justice Act, which put into place in a permanent way the advisory committee that was put into place by the previous Attorney General, said:

"The second aspect of the bill is the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee, and again that's an aspect of the bill that is really nothing particularly remarkable, because it's been in operation in the province of Ontario for many years, or for at least the last several years, dealing with the appointment of provincial court judges. Now we have legislated that procedure. We've recognized a formality to it that is, as well, a good thing. It's a good thing because both the Ontario Judicial Council and the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee involve significant input from the public so that the justice system is not elevated to a point or to a position above the

public's reach and understanding. The public is very much a part of these procedures, and I think that as well is a good thing for the administration of justice in Ontario."

I would agree with the now Attorney General in those comments. We all know that the pool of provincial judges has often been the pool from which federal judgeships have been chosen. People get elevated from provincial judgeships to federal judgeships often, and I believe the same will be true of case management masters. They will provide a pool from which the selection of justices at both the provincial and the federal levels is likely to be made, because they will have proven their ability. Therefore, it is very important that this first step be part of a public appointments procedure and not just at the fiat of the government that happens to be in power.

Mr Crozier: I didn't have the opportunity in my brief remarks that I gave today to reiterate what I had earlier briefly commented on, and that is, I would hope with the case management system that's going to be put into effect and the streamlining of the court system that we don't forget that the general public who serve on juries, who are dedicated individuals who probably, through serving on a jury, do so at some economic loss in many cases and do so at some time away from their families and the things they like to do — I hope that the system becomes more efficient behind the scenes so that kind of thing doesn't occur. I gave the example earlier, and there were some members who weren't here at that time, of having been called late at night to be told I didn't have to go in the next day when there was jury selection, or on the other hand, having been called late and having to make arrangements for the next day.

I hope in all this streamlining that our jury selection, at least the scheduling of when you have to be there for jury selection, has a little more order to it, because that again saves time in the court and saves time for individuals who participate in it. I didn't get selected for a jury at that time and it would have been interesting to have done so, but everyone wants to do their part, I'm sure, in a system that's more efficient and less costly.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I want to commend my colleague the member for Fort York for his comments this afternoon, very much which followed from the discussion that my colleague the member for London Centre had in this House yesterday with respect to this bill.

There is no doubt that we are going to support this bill; we made that clear yesterday. However, both of my colleagues have been very clear that there are significant changes that should be made to be clear that the whole notion of patronage is taken out of the changes that the Attorney General wants to make. That would, if he would follow through on that, follow very much in line with work that was begun by the former Liberal government and then very much carried on under us.

For example, it was our government that significantly changed the process whereby justices of the peace are appointed in this province. We made it very clear that no longer could a friend of a friend of someone else who was in power automatically become a justice of the peace, but in fact there would be a committee that would be established that would have representation from the

bar, representation from the community and others who would assess the qualifications of people who wanted to be justices of the peace and to make a determination as to whether they would be appropriate to serve in the judicial system in our province.

We secondly followed up from the Liberals and made it mandatory that appointments made by the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee would be mandatory. That again, I think, takes the politics out of the process, allows for people who have to use the system and who need to have access to it to be assured that they are going to get a fair hearing, that it's going to be non-partisan, independent and that the people who are making judgments about their cases are qualified to be there. We have made it clear to the Attorney General, and I hope he will take our advice on this, that he should do the same with respect to the case management masters. We should have a process in place where the public has the opportunity to participate and take patronage out of it completely.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Fort York has two minutes.

Mr Marchese: I thank the members for St Catharines, London Centre, Essex South and Sudbury East. I was expecting the Attorney General to respond to some of the things I had raised, because I thought he took an interest earlier in some of the comments I had made, but I'm comforted in the belief that he was listening and comforted in the notion that somehow he's going to respond positively to what I said. Why else would he not have spoken?

1750

The advice I have to the Attorney General is the following. First, depoliticize the appointments process. It is good for you and good for everyone in Ontario to have a judicial advisory committee do the appointments of these case management masters. You depoliticize it by getting yourself out as the sole arbitrator appointments person of these individuals. We think it's in your interest and everybody's interest to do so.

Again as it relates to community involvement, in the same way that he made changes to the Charities Accounting Act, I would recommend to him that he continue the requirement that would permit the regional court management advisory committee to meet four times a year. That will allow for the input of the community to be had. It will permit the Attorney General to know what this advisory committee is thinking. But if you don't allow them to meet at least four times a year, my feeling is they're not going to meet at all. Is that what you want? Do you want them not to meet? Because that's what you're doing by doing this.

I hope he's listening to the suggestions that we have made.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): It's indeed a pleasure to speak to Bill 79. I think members should be reminded about what this bill actually does.

It first amends the Courts of Justice Act to permit the appointment of case management masters. I think we would all agree that having a little bit more management in the courts might be a very good thing for the province of Ontario and we have to be supportive of that. In that vein, we over here in the opposition have indicated

support in general for this bill, although we have a few minor difficulties.

The second thing it does is that it amends the Courts of Justice Act to change the name of the Ontario courts. Well, that's earthshattering, that really is. I suspect that lawyers and judges may appreciate that, but frankly I don't think this is going to change the world for my constituents or for most of those people who from time to time may have some interest in the court system or some need to use the court system. Changing the name, while laudatory perhaps to the legal profession, probably does not do very much for the ordinary fellow from Kagawong or Killarney or Massey. It's probably not going to make a heck of a lot of difference to them what we call the courts, because they don't know what we call the courts now.

The third point is that it gives the power to make regulations under the Charities Accounting Act to the Attorney General, and that's a recommendation of the public guardian and trustee, again probably a good thing but hardly the stuff that earthshattering material is made of.

Fourth, it makes some housekeeping and minor amendments to the Courts of Justice Act and the Children's Law Reform Act.

This bill is very supportable. I'm glad it's going to committee, as I understand, but basically it doesn't change a whole lot of anything unless you like to print new stationery. If you like to print new stationery, this will be good for printers in Ontario and that will probably create jobs, and wow. But in terms of being very impressive, I'm not sure it really changes very much.

What we have to do is see this in some kind of context, and I think the context was laid out by the Attorney General this spring. The Attorney General this spring announced \$120 million worth of cuts to the justice system, of which \$60 million and 606 jobs came out of the Ministry of the Attorney General. At the time, the Attorney General promised all of Ontarians that there would be no cut to core services. Despite that, we've learned that there are 70 less crown prosecutors in Ontario; 15% of the crown prosecutors were cut.

What that means in Algoma-Manitoulin is that we no longer have a crown attorney in the district of Manitoulin. There is no longer a crown attorney in the great judicial district of Manitoulin. To my constituents that was important. To have a crown attorney who understood the district of Manitoulin and the legal problems that might arise there was far better than importing people to prosecute cases, often being briefed on the way over to the courtroom from Sudbury. That's not always most effective. It's hard on the defence lawyers. It's difficult.

The second thing I wanted to talk about quickly, because the government whip seems to be a little antsy, is the fact that we're not seeing justices of the peace appointed in any kind of a timely manner. We have needed a justice of the peace in the Elliot Lake area for months; it must probably be going on a year. I've written repeatedly. We have not seen a justice of the peace appointed for a city of 14,000 people on the north shore. The police officers are sometimes driving two and three hours to get a warrant. It's just unacceptable. Therefore,

when the minister tries to make believe that this is important and significant, I don't think my constituents are going to notice a heck of a lot of difference.

The third point, and I've been on this matter for a long time, is that somebody should have a look at judicial district lines. We have a case where one part of my riding is in the Algoma district, which means you have to go to the Sault, but you have to drive through the Sudbury district to get there. That does not make any sense. It's just something that should be corrected.

Given the time, I will complete my comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ed Doyle): Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Tilson has moved second reading of Bill 79. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Hey, I thought you left that job.

The Acting Speaker: I broke my deal.

Hon Mr Harnick: Speaker, with unanimous consent, the bill should be referred to the justice committee.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ed Doyle): Pursuant to standing order 34, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Windsor-Sandwich has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given earlier today by the Minister of Health. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): The minister?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ed Doyle): The minister shall be here momentarily.

Mrs Pupatello: I hope the Minister of Health intends to be here for this address, since he is responsible, along with the Premier of Ontario, for the dire situation.

If I could refresh the memory of the House, my question today was in regard to the obstetricians in the Windsor area. We have women in my constituency office alone, 68 at last count, for whom we cannot find obstetricians. Several of these women are considered at-risk cases by their family doctors; others simply don't have family doctors.

Today, the minister responded by telling me that I might be scaremongering somehow. When these women call our offices the first thing we do is we call the minister on their behalf and we suggest that they call the minister directly, which they have all done. I'd like to share with you these women's experiences.

What has happened is that the minister's office has responded by telling these women to call the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The college of physicians in turn tells the women to call the obstetricians in my home town. Of course, they're not taking on new patients, and so the women are in the midst of this vicious circle which they can't get out of.

1800

At this point, they call us again. We make intervention on their part. I will tell the minister that I have personally called him and not once have received a phone call back. I have written letters to which I've had no reply. The women themselves have written letters as well.

Even if the women are not at risk, we consider prenatal care for these women paramount in the healthy development of children and healthy moms in my community. Likewise, the women at risk are in a particularly dangerous position because they must have prenatal care, so at some point the minister has agreed that the women can pop across the river for care.

The minister suggests today that I have done nothing to help him find solutions. Au contraire, M. Minister. We have intervened to find hospitals in the States that will take these women on, only to find that we must get pre-approval by OHIP, and we begin working with the OHIP offices. What we have found out as late as today is that what the OHIP office requires is a letter from the college of physicians which will authorize the pre-payment of OHIP once the women do go over. We called the college today and they are not aware of having to write any such letter, because you, Minister, are not keeping your various offices informed of what this process must be.

At the end of the day, all that matters to me is that I have 68 women on my office list who currently do not have obstetrical care, and several of those women are at risk. Minister, you are in charge. It is your responsibility to find a solution. I have tried to help these women and, in contrast to what you said to me in the House today, I have tried to help find obstetricians for these women. We've used up all of the resources in London. The London OBs are telling us: "We can't take any more." One of my constituents, who has a heart problem, the London OB refuses to take along the 401 because it's too dangerous for her. I can't tell you the number of cases.

All of the women have called your office. Your ministry has sent them around the bend. They land up back on our desk and we are trying to find solutions. You announced today to the press, not to the House, that you are in negotiations to open up a clinic where you are going to fly in obstetricians —

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): I told you that in answer to my question.

Mrs Pupatello: Apparently you did, outside the House today — that you are in negotiations to open up some kind of clinic. This is what they did in Saskatchewan back in the 1960s because the government could not handle the job action that was laid out to it by the doctors there.

Instead of dealing with the issue at hand, you are proposing a Band-Aid solution. You think you'll bring obstetricians in from somewhere — England again? What OB could possibly want to come into our area with the kind of atmosphere that currently exists? The response from my obstetricians today is simply that if the hospitals enter into negotiations to open up a clinic, all of them will cease immediately, only furthering the very action that you're trying to prevent.

If you are truly concerned with solving this problem, I am asking you please to enter into serious negotiation with an area like Windsor, which is very unlike the city

of Toronto as far as doctors are concerned. We have very special problems. We've had shortages that have existed for some time. Your action since you became minister has only exaggerated the issue for us. Your clawbacks were simply the last straw for our doctors. You must deal with the issue.

Our OBs in our town are already working every weekend. They are already working every day of the week. They simply cannot take more patients on. Everything you have done to date has simply exacerbated it for our doctors, and at the end of the day our patients to do not have the care that you are responsible, as the Minister of Health, for delivering. It is your responsibility to deliver healthy babies for healthy mothers in my community, and I would like a direct answer that will not exacerbate the situation and simply throw more gasoline on the fire in my town, because that is what you are doing today.

Hon Mr Wilson: First of all, the honourable member is incorrect. I mentioned the fact that her hospital administrators were down this afternoon, meeting with ministry officials. That shouldn't be a surprise. We've been trying to find solutions to this very serious problem for quite some time.

I'm pleased to announce — and it's not meant to put fire, but if people can't get services, I have to provide services — that if a clinic is the way to go because obstetricians there are refusing to provide services, then we're going to open up a clinic in conjunction with your two hospitals, and the proposal is that an obstetrician will staff that clinic along with the multidisciplinary team.

Mrs Papatello: You know and I know it's a Band-Aid solution.

Hon Mr Wilson: Well, you've had a shortage —

Mrs Papatello: It's a Band-Aid solution.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Allow the minister to respond.

Hon Mr Wilson: Mr Speaker, she's asked me to come here, when I'm supposed to be somewhere else, to respond to the very serious concerns of her constituents. I'd appreciate it if she'd listen for the next four minutes, the time I have.

Obstetricians in this province were given about a \$14,000 raise, if they're doing an average of 165 births per year, which is the average, so the average obstetrician got a raise. I can't think of anybody else who got a raise. We're paying their malpractice insurance up to the 1995 levels. I have said consistently that we will pay the 1996 one from January 1, the extra 20% increase, if Justice Dubin comes back and indicates that —

Mrs Papatello: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Hon Mr Wilson: How can she do a point of order?

The Acting Speaker: No order. I'm sorry.

Hon Mr Wilson: There's no order in this.

The Acting Speaker: No point of order in this.

Mrs Papatello: The obstetricians in Windsor are double the level of any other obstetricians in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Allow the minister to continue.

Hon Mr Wilson: Just for the record, we've given them a raise; we've exempted baby deliveries from the threshold. You'd think if you wanted to make more income you'd redouble the number of deliveries you do,

whether you're a family practitioner or an obstetrician. We're moving to work towards this clinic. Apparently it was an excellent meeting. It's a multidisciplinary approach which I think would suit Windsor very much and it's a local solution that we're working on together between the ministry — at the end of the day my job, on behalf of the people of Ontario, is to make sure there's access to services.

A question I have would go right to your federal cousins. They're good at penalizing provinces under the Canada Health Act. The fact of the matter is that if I take all reasonable measures, including giving raises, we are in the serious negotiations you've asked for. But at the end of the day, if somebody refuses to look after a patient or take on a new patient, there's only so much we can do. We've come to the conclusion at this point that a clinic has to take some of the pressure off, and I think you would agree that it's preferable to have the services on our side of the river than on the American side, and that's what we're working at.

At the same time, though, I want to say to obstetricians in the area that we are trying to deal with their frustrations, which I think come around the schedule of benefits. Yes, ophthalmologists and dermatologists are billing \$450,000 a year in a 9-to-5 job and obstetricians have to get up at all kinds of hours and deliver babies, as do a lot of family practitioners, but that's something I can't solve overnight. It's called relative value in the fee schedule. It's trying to recognize the lifestyle and concerns and frustrations that certain doctors have.

I remind you that the NDP gave the OMA the fee schedule under the 1991 agreement and said, "Make any changes you want." All changes to the schedule of benefits, which is the schedule of medically necessary services in each province, have to go through cabinet, and the NDP said, "You make the changes." They didn't make one change in five years. The only change that's been made is the one we made on April 1, which was to give obstetricians a 30% raise based on a 10-year-old OMA report that said baby deliveries in this province are historically underfunded.

When I got the fee schedule back after Bill 26 we made the change, we gave them a raise and we're dealing with the rest of their frustrations at the table. It's one of the things I'm trying to say to the OMA, "Look, I'll help you with the politics of changing the fee schedule and recognizing the lifestyle." Unlike downtown Toronto, where they may never have to see an emergency room, family practitioners in rural areas have to take weekend and night emergencies on call. That has to be recognized. It's not recognized in the fee schedule now. It's an historic problem and this government is committed.

I can tell you it's a very difficult thing because medical politics, with 35 specialty groups and then the family practitioners and general practitioners, are very difficult politics. I'm willing to help them adjust the fee schedule to recognize the frustrations that obstetricians and other specialists have.

The Acting Speaker: There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. The House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1810.

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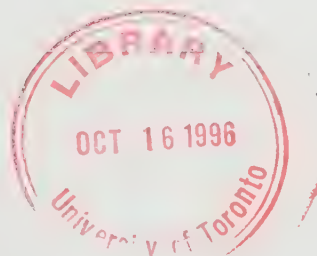
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Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 octobre 1996

*The House met at 1332.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Anyone who is wondering why last Wednesday in the Legislature I demanded that the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations release a secret government report entitled *Gambling in Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns, 1995*, would be well aware today that this report is dynamite for the Premier and his cabinet.

My colleague Liberal MPP Bruce Crozier has requested that the minister release this very revealing report to the justice committee that is dealing with a government bill that would permit up to 20,000 VLTs or video slot machines to be placed in bars and restaurants in every neighbourhood in Ontario.

The contention by the Premier, the Solicitor General and the consumer minister that they have not read the report is simply not believable.

Now that several elements of the secret report have come to light and the TV program *W Five* has confirmed many of the warnings that we in the Liberal caucus have been issuing, namely, that illegal activities and the involvement of criminal elements are prevalent in government-sanctioned gambling in Ontario, surely the Premier will release the entire report to the public.

To proceed with the Premier's bill allowing 20,000 video slot machines across Ontario would be madness in view of the latest revelations. I call upon the Premier to come to his senses and withdraw this ill-advised legislation.

It appears that nothing less than a full public inquiry into gambling activities in Ontario will clear the air and reassure the people of the province of Ontario.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Yesterday, in answer to questions from my new leader, the Minister of Labour said that we had not made any improvements at all to the plight of garment workers, particularly those who are working in the home, and went on to talk about the improvements they have made.

First of all, let me set the record straight. Our government, in July 1994, made improvements to the Employment Standards Act that removed the current exclusions for home workers under the Employment Standards Act with regard to hours of work, overtime and holiday pay. We also created a special 10% premium on the general

minimum wage to cover such overhead costs as heating and electricity and the purchase cost of machinery normally borne by the employer. We also required employers to provide home workers with a written summary of their conditions of employment, including piece or hourly rates, the nature and amount of work and the completion deadline.

Further to that, the minister had the audacity to say that she's made great strides in the last year. Well, I guess from one perspective she has: She's made things a lot worse for workers in this province and made things a lot better for her corporate friends. I'll stack up our agenda on labour legislation and fighting for workers, particularly the most vulnerable, such as home workers, any day of the week against the ongoing attack that this government has launched against workers, particularly women, in this province. I'll have that debate and that comparison any day of the week.

JIM SHAW

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): As the members of this House know full well, the 1996 Paralympic Games were held in Atlanta in August 1996. It is my privilege to stand and recognize the important accomplishments of one of my constituents. Mr Jim Shaw, a 23-year-old from Newcastle, Ontario, is a world champion who also suffers from cerebral palsy. Jim Shaw has been competing since 1992 and in Atlanta won two golds and a bronze medal in the world's largest competition for athletes with disabilities. Jim won a bronze in javelin, a gold medal in shot-put and a world record gold medal toss of 41.6 metres in the discus.

The Canadian team placed seventh in a field of 120 countries. Jim Shaw is now recognized not only as a local hero but indeed a world champion. I have met Jim and am proud of his humble and friendly manner, a great role model for any young person. Jim speaks of his disability rather matter-of-factly. He says, "It is probably what most people tend to look at, but I seldom consider it."

I would ask all members to recognize the accomplishments of Jim Shaw and all our disabled athletes. I know we are all proud of them, their accomplishments and courage both on and off the field.

OBSTETRICAL CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Today I address my remarks to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, following my question regarding obstetrical care in my community, the minister left the chamber and went into a reporters' scrum to announce a clinic of some sort that's going to magically appear in my community. He

did this assuming as well that the hospitals were fully onside and prepared to do this within 30 to 60 days.

The reality is that the meeting he was involved in with hospitals from my community involved an integrated delivery system for maternal health care, a fully rounded program which is a far longer-term solution and does nothing to address the immediate concerns of women in my community who are still on a list and still do not have prenatal care or obstetrical care and do not know who will be delivering their babies.

I find it absolutely irresponsible that a minister of this crown could possibly go to reporters and make an announcement without having an official amount of money it will cost to implement such a system. One group is talking about a long-term solution, while the minister is saying he is going to find redress for an immediate solution to the problem our women have in my community. I insist that the minister come to the table and say he is prepared to provide the funding for such a long-term solution, yes; and he must also be prepared to address the immediate concerns of women in my community who need care today. Thank you, Mr Minister — Mr Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Cochrane South.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Heaven knows he'd like to be called Mr Minister, but at this point it's Mr Speaker.

FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Mr Speaker, as you know, the minister responsible, the Attorney General, has been saying in this House for the past number of months that nothing he has done within the family support plan has caused the system to come into disarray. To put it into perspective, the government has moved on an initiative to privatize the family support plan and in the interim has really put the system into jeopardy.

1340

We have a number of cases we have raised in this House on behalf of constituents who have come to our offices and said, "I have a situation where my ex-husband has paid the support to the family support plan," and the ex-wife has not received the money coming back. The minister keeps on denying that such cases exist. Time after time we have come into this House, we have presented cases to the minister and the minister at each opportunity has turned around and said, "No, there's nothing wrong."

I have here yet another five cases of that nature that have come to my constituency office over the last number of weeks. These are just the tip of the iceberg. I want to present these to the minister on behalf of the constituents of Cochrane South and say to him that if there isn't a problem with this system, these people sure don't know it because they certainly have a problem with the system. I call on the minister to put the system back the way it was so that people in the family support plan get the money they're entitled to.

GEORGE McLEOD

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): There's no doubt that over the term of this government there'll be

many occasions to celebrate the accomplishments of volunteers in our community and to praise them for the extraordinary way in which their deeds make this a better society in which we live.

It's unlikely, though, that I will ever again meet an Ontarian with the record of community service as exceptional as the one recognized in my riding last week. Among 34 volunteers recognized by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 258, one volunteer stood out. Mr George McLeod was recognized for 76 years of continuous service to the legion and its predecessors, the British Empire Service League and the Great War Veterans.

Mr McLeod joined the army at age 14 and after two years of active service overseas returned to Canada and joined the Northwest Mounted Police at age 16. He was one of 180 police sent to put down the Winnipeg riots in 1919. Returning to Toronto, he joined the Toronto fire department where he served for 42 years and retired as a captain. Mr McLeod lost two of his sons in the Second World War. During his 76 years of legion service he has served in most of the executive roles.

I was truly humbled to meet such an incredible link with our country's past and I'm sure all members join me in saluting Mr George McLeod for his work in the Legion and in the firefighters' association, and extending our thanks for his service to his community and to his country as both a volunteer and a patriot.

ADULT EDUCATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): There was a press conference today by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, which released a survey of 7,723 adult high school students. It's a fascinating piece of work, an excellent piece of work, and something I'm sure the Minister of Education will want to take a second look at because of the implications.

The survey was conducted in 117 schools during May and revealed some very interesting statistics. It first of all revealed that the adult students had a higher degree of representation among women, visible minorities and people with disabilities. Yet when you look at the success story of this program, 83% graduate; 36% move on to colleges and universities and 47% move right into the workplace. Not only that; a full 50% are completely off welfare after they've completed their program.

I would challenge the government to find a program that is more effective, more efficient than the existing program, which is now being hampered and cut. If they read this particular report and if they want to make a decision based on information and not just on politics and economics, they must support adult education.

SPORTS FUNDING

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I want to comment today on the announcement by the Minister of Citizenship last Friday around the new strategy for amateur sport. What becomes really clear, having attended the conference and talked to people who are affected by these cuts, is that what she announced is not a strategy. What she announced is simply another cut to kids and programs for children. Cutting funding to sports programs means fewer kids will have the chance to take part.

It seems that this minister and this government are forgetting that sports and recreation programs play a major role in the development of our young people. They learn cooperation, they learn leadership skills, they get some exercise and they have some fun. Our kids are richer for that experience.

In tying her criteria for funding to the Olympic sports as the only ones that will be funded from now on, what the minister is forgetting is that this keeps out of the funding scheme sports like the Ontario Ball Hockey Association, a program which involves some 17,000 young people across the province and which, as they themselves indicated to us, is in the top 20% in terms of provincial participation. Their seeming preoccupation with cutting administration costs seems to forget that it's those administrators who coordinate the many hundreds of volunteers throughout the province who end up providing these programs. So what we're seeing here again is not a strategy but another series of cuts.

FLU AND PNEUMOCOCCAL IMMUNIZATION

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): I would like to recognize October as National Flu Prevention Awareness Month. It's flu season and we all know the symptoms and the consequences. But for some 2,000 to 5,000 people, the flu can be life-threatening. People at risk of the flu and pneumococcal disease are seniors and anyone with deficient immune systems, chronic heart, lung, kidney or liver diseases, and those with HIV infections.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Windsor-Sandwich, come to order, please.

Mrs Johns: Health Minister Jim Wilson recently announced a new \$20-million program to protect Ontarians at risk with pneumococcal disease and influenza over the next three years. The pneumococcal vaccine is now being distributed to physicians' offices and long-term-care facilities. The most vulnerable citizens in nursing homes and homes for the aged, as well as those at risk, will be the first to be offered the vaccine free of charge through their family physicians over the next two years. Healthy seniors will be offered the vaccine in the program's third year. After that, the vaccine will be offered to people as they turn 65.

This government, through its immunization programs — \$4.5 million to eradicate measles, \$11 million to protect students from hepatitis B and \$20 million to protect seniors from pneumococcal disease — is again meeting the commitment we made in the Common Sense Revolution. We will reinvest dollars in preventive care which can help people avoid becoming ill in the first place.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION REFORM

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): Our government has made a strong commitment to raise the standards of education in Ontario —

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, the member for Hamilton East.

Hon Mr Snobelen: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I haven't been in a situation where there was catcalling recently — and to create a system that offers students a quality education while improving accountability and affordability to parents and taxpayers.

Under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris, this government has made major strides to improve quality and to make sure the public receives full value for its education tax dollar.

I have already announced a number of steps to achieve this goal, including the establishment of an Ontario College of Teachers, the introduction of province-wide testing by the Education Quality and Accountability Office and the release of the secondary school reform paper, which will be the basis for extensive consultations across the province in November. Later this year I will also introduce a more specific curriculum that will set high standards for our students in grades 1 to 9.

In tandem with these initiatives, I am pleased to release a standard report card that will better inform parents about their children's progress. Too many parents have been dissatisfied by the ambiguity of the different report cards used across the province. A standard report card will ensure consistency across the province and will give parents specific information about how their child is doing and what needs to be improved.

Right now 900 schools are field-testing a series of models that we have developed. We will make adjustments based on the feedback we receive from teachers and parents, and by September of next year each school in the province will use a provincial report card.

Surely even the members opposite will realize that having an improved system of reporting to parents, a system designed with the help of parents, will help improve the quality of our education system. I am pleased to announce this initiative today.

1350

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Related to the degree of standardized testing, we agree that the initiative should be well done. But I have a few comments to make in relation to that.

First of all, the minister will know that the Toronto Board of Education went through a year and a half of developing a standard report card and field-tested this thoroughly. To my knowledge, they have not been consulted in terms of your particular initiative. It seems to me that's a very large sampling you might want to take into consideration in terms of the experience they've gained and what they've learned after they've introduced a standard report card.

There was an element in their report card which I thought was a fascinating feature. It had an opportunity for students to comment and engage with their teachers in terms of the marks they received. As the minister will well know, if a student is involved in a degree of self-evaluation and assessment, it heightens the sense of social accountability for the student, the interest of the student and the sense of feeling that, "This isn't just someone else judging me in a totally objective manner."

Minister, what is the role of the Education Quality and Accountability Office? It seems to me that this office was

set up to manage this kind of testing. Are they playing a role in that? With all the wisdom and corporate memory that they've accumulated to date, is that being offered to the process?

The other point would be the flexibility. We have a big province. As you know, we have many regions of Ontario where the lifestyle varies. It's quite different to live in a small northern town or a small town in eastern Ontario or southwestern Ontario than it might be to live in downtown Metro Toronto. What kind of accommodations are there? There should be a core test and report card, but there should also be some flexibility to allow for lifestyle in the various regions throughout Ontario.

You made one statement in here, that "Under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris, this government has made major strides to improve quality and to make sure the public receives full value for its education tax dollar." If we took a report card on you, and my colleague will speak on this in a moment, one of the areas will be the area of the capital freeze, the freeze on renovations for schools. We have a youngster with us today all the way from Carleton Place, he and his mom, who have come here to talk with you to let you know what his school is like, the deteriorated situation his school is in, Carleton Place High School. I hope you relate this to your own situation when you look at standardized testing.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I have a report card here in my hand, A First Year Report Card on the Ontario Government. It goes on to talk about excellence in education, and just let me quote from that report card.

"A larger share of the education dollar is going directly to 'learning,' where it matters most!" Well, I've suggested to this minister that he doesn't know where it matters the most. I challenged him the other day to call a teacher. I don't believe he's done that yet. That's where it matters the most, Minister: in the classroom.

Minister, you have a letter from the Dryden Board of Education, Ignace school. They have actually given you an invitation because they want you to come into their classroom to find out what's going on in those classrooms. You talk about the education dollar going back into the classroom. Well, it's not happening. They've issued you a challenge to come and learn with them in their classroom.

This is the way the letter ends, because I don't think you've responded to it yet and maybe have not even read it:

"I do not think you can have any idea what a teacher does or what happens in schools today unless you are there. You can sit and talk to bureaucrats as long as you want, but until you walk in someone else's shoes, you do not have the whole picture."

I encourage you to get involved. Get involved in what's going on in the classroom on the front line. Tell those teachers they're doing something that's going to help us in the future with our future generation. I ask you to take up the challenge that's been given to you by the principal of Ignace public school, where she's actually asked you to come in and find out what's going on in the classroom. I ask you to follow up on the challenge I gave you the other day to talk to a teacher, a teacher who goes into that classroom every day.

Minister, I don't think your heart is really where it should be: in the classroom with those students, where it means the most.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to respond to the Minister of Education and Training's comments regarding a standard report card. As all members of the House are aware, the pilot projects for implementation of a standard report card were initiated by the previous government and by my colleague the member for Windsor-Riverside as Minister of Education and Training. For that reason, obviously, we are in support of the fact that the minister is proceeding with this initiative to make it easier for parents to understand in a standardized way what progress their children are making in education. I think it's perhaps time that the minister received a report card himself.

One of the things we might look at with regard to the standard report card is the fact that there is apparently no place on it listing physical or health education as a subject area. I wonder why the minister and the ministry are not including physical and health education as part of the standard report card requirements since, as we all know, physical and health education is very important for the overall education of a student.

Having said that, let's judge the minister on his own commitment. This was a party that was elected with a commitment that it would not hurt the classroom, that classroom education would not suffer at all. Yet we've seen this government take \$400 million out of public education last year, somewhere between 5% and 8% of the grants to school boards removed from education funding and as a result of that we've seen junior kindergarten programs terminated, some of them changed substantially or combined with senior kindergarten programs, again adversely affecting the classroom education of the students involved in those junior kindergarten programs.

We've seen changes in the funding for adult education in the province, so that students who are 21 years of age or over are being told they only can get their courses through continuing education programs, which are funded at half of the amount of day school education programs. As a result, many adult students are not able to graduate and are stuck on the welfare rolls.

With regard to the Education Quality and Accountability Office that is supposed to be central to this whole process, we passed the legislation setting up that office, but for some reason —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr Wildman: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Education Quality and Accountability Office — for some reason, the appointment of the chair of that organization has been apparently revoked by the cabinet. I'd like to know what is going on over there. The minister says he is committed, and his government and the Premier are committed, to improving the quality of education and to making sure the public receives full value for its education tax dollar. After taking \$400 million out of education last year, which on an annualized basis is about \$800 million to \$1 billion, the minister is now musing about taking another \$600 million out of education this year.

The minister says he's taking these measures to ensure that every Ontario student receives the highest quality of education possible. Let's be frank. When a decision is based on whether or not to improve quality or whether or not to take money out, the fact is that everything that is being done by this minister and his government in education is fiscally driven. The question is not whether quality will be improved, but how much money can be saved by cutting programs, and if it hurts education and it hurts classroom education, that doesn't matter.

The standardized report card that this minister should get from every student in this province, from every teacher in this province, from every trustee in this province, from every parent in this province is an F for destroying classroom education because he wants to get as much money as possible out of public education in Ontario.

APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order dealing with procedures in a committee, particularly the government agencies committee and standing order 106. It's something I would like to set out for you briefly and ask that you take a look at, because I think there has been a breach of the standing orders and I believe it's the kind of thing that you as Speaker need to take a look at.

As you know, we in that committee, among other things, review intended government appointees. I know you're familiar with that process because you sat as a member of that committee in the past.

This morning the committee was scheduled to review three intended appointees. One of those three intended appointees had been chosen by the government caucus: Richard Johnston, who had been designated by the cabinet as the intended appointee to the position of chair of the Education Quality and Accountability Office, in fact to be reappointed to that position, which he's held for the last couple of years.

1400

We discovered at the committee that he had been called yesterday some time and told not to appear because, as we understand it, he was told that his appointment had been withdrawn.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order, please. I'm having difficulty hearing.

Mr Silipo: The point I want to raise with you is that the communication we had in front of the committee this morning in my view is not consistent with the standing orders. I'm not standing here on a point of order questioning the wisdom the government may or may not have shown in reappointing or not reappointing Mr Johnston; I appreciate that's an issue that has to do with other concerns, political and otherwise. But I'm not raising that issue with you as part of this point of order. I want to be very clear about that.

As you may recall, the intended appointments process comes to us in this way: The Premier, upon a decision of the cabinet, sends to members of the standing committee on government agencies a list of intended appointees,

with the words, "I am attaching information on intended order-in-council appointments to agencies, boards and commissions which received cabinet approval on" whatever the date is.

There's very clearly a cabinet decision made to appoint these people subject to the process set out in standing order 106. That process allows government members as well as opposition members the ability to review some of those intended appointees. That process was followed to that extent and, as I said, resulted in Mr Richard Johnston having been chosen by the government caucus to be questioned this morning, his appointment to be reviewed this morning.

We then discovered, upon arriving at the committee this morning, that there was a letter from Marilyn Sharma, who is the general manager of the Public Appointments Secretariat, informing the committee that one item included in that memorandum from the Premier has been withdrawn and should therefore not be considered.

My point in raising this with you, Mr Speaker, is that I believe that is not following the standing order. I would argue that I don't think there is a process in the standing order that allows for those intended appointments to be pulled back once the committee is on the verge of that process. But even if that were the case, if that were allowed, I suggest to you that we have had no communication; that the cabinet, which made that initial decision and which kickstarts the process — according to standing order 106 it very clearly kickstarts the process. It says, "A minister of the crown shall lay on the table a certificate stating that the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Premier, as the case may be, intends to appoint a person to an agency, board or commission." It doesn't say an employee or anybody else; it says "a minister or the Premier."

In this case, the notification we received was not proper because it was not from the Premier, was not from a minister of the crown, and did not specifically indicate that the cabinet had changed its mind.

I ask you to take a look at that because I think it's a serious breach of the process, a very detailed process that's set out under standing order 106 as it relates to the review process for intended appointees.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Dovercourt for his point of order and, obviously, the thought that went into it. There are a couple of points I would make previous to my ruling. First and foremost, it's not up to the Speaker to begin second-guessing rulings by the chairs of committees. The chairs of committees would rule this in or out of order, and that's their role, and propriety would dictate that those rules are made.

The only way that the Speaker may begin to second-guess or suggest that the rulings be overturned or changed would be if a majority of the committee members voted or the committee came to the Legislature seeking a ruling from the Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker: — or not, obviously. That is the only possible way the Speaker may become involved in committee hearings, rulings or decisions made by the Chair. The only alternative you may take at this time, if

you would like the Speaker to review the ruling made by the Chair at the time, is if the committee decided en masse and in vote to bring the ruling before the House and in fact before the Speaker.

I have no rights or privileges to begin second-guessing rulings of chairs of committees. That would leave me in the awkward and tenuous position of having to hear points of order on all decisions potentially made at committee level.

Finally, I guess, if it is a position and a bone of contention that you want to see this, you have every right and obligation on behalf of your constituents to go back to the committee and seek majority consensus on the committee to appeal to the Speaker.

Mr Silipo: Mr Speaker, if I may just briefly —

The Speaker: Briefly.

Mr Silipo: Very briefly. I would have under normal circumstances done exactly what you had suggested because I believe, as you do, that that process is the normal process. I specifically raised this with you because standing order 106 is a different order, I believe, than the others as they apply to the processes of a committee. In fulfilling its obligations under standing order 106, the standing committee on government agencies is acting for the entire Legislature, and I think there is a difference in that. I would ask you to just take a look at that, because I believe there is a distinction between the application of this particular order and any other disagreement that I or any other member of the committee might have on any other issue. I would just ask you to take a look at that.

The Speaker: The member for Dovercourt, I will give you my undertaking to review it, if that's what you're asking of me. I will review it in fairness and in light — you will probably find, from my last statement I made, I will be predisposed to making the decision I'm making. But if you're asking me to review it, I'll be more than happy to review it and report back.

UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Further on yesterday's exchange between the member for Hamilton Centre and the Speaker with respect to withdrawal and what constitutes withdrawing a comment, I want to be very clear with the House today that many Speakers have different interpretations on what is considered withdrawn and what isn't. I tried to get on the record yesterday exactly how I felt. Maybe I was not clear enough and maybe yesterday was a good time to allow the member to set the parameters.

In essence, in future, you have two options when you're asked to withdraw: You may withdraw the comment, no caveats, unequivocally withdraw, or you don't. Obviously ultimately if you don't, then you will be named and asked to be escorted out. But I don't want there to be any unknown quantities involved when you've been asked to withdraw. There are simply no ifs, ands or buts, as I said yesterday; it's simply withdraw or not. Many Speakers work different ways. I think this is the most appropriate way to pursue that issue and you're given your choice in that matter.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): On a point of privilege with regard to the comment that you just made, Mr Speaker: I just want to be very clear, since I was the focus of your comments, that yesterday might or might not be the best example of that, and I think we managed to work our way through that and I think both of us used a fair amount of discretion and got through the moment.

I would like to ask you what happens to any member in this House where they sincerely are not sure or not clear, or in their opinion did not and you're asking an admission of guilt; I find it hard to understand why one has to stand and say, "I'm automatically guilty," even if I disagree or don't know why, when —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I appreciate what you're saying, to the member for Hamilton Centre. I think what I'm trying to point out is, I would not ask a member to withdraw unless I'm very clear that that is in fact out of order. What I'm trying to point out is that you're asked to withdraw by the Speaker and the Speaker is clear — I was very clear yesterday that what you said was completely out of order, I felt, and I didn't want to push the envelope yesterday. Because it's a new Speaker, I want to give you the parameters and the guidelines.

What I'm trying to point out is, if I'm asking someone to withdraw, I think it's completely out of order, and it's just that simple. Really, if you don't have a Speaker being able to make those kinds of decisions, then we fall into chaos. I thank the member for Hamilton Centre.

1410

ORAL QUESTIONS

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Last week, Liberal House leader Mr Jim Bradley asked the minister for a secret police report entitled *Gambling In Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns*, 1995. The member for Essex South repeated the request earlier at justice committee. Both times they were refused.

We now know why the minister is deliberately keeping the report from the opposition and from government benchers, because we are concerned about the proliferation of video slot machines: This secret police report points to a web of organized crime throughout Ontario's gaming industry.

My question to the minister is, will he release the secret report so that we can do our job as legislators and assess the real impact of video slot machines and the threat of organized crime in this province?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I refer this question to my colleague the Solicitor General.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): In response to the member's question related to the press reports and the so-called, as she described it, "secret report," this was a

report commissioned through the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario. It is their report. It is not the government's report. I would respectfully suggest that she approach the chair, Chief Julian Fantino of London Police Services, to see if it will be released.

Ms Castrilli: This is really unbelievable. This morning the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations said he hasn't read the report, the Solicitor General said he hasn't read the report, the Premier has said he hasn't read the report, yet the government plans to ram down this video slot machine bill. They're playing a game of "See no evil, hear no evil." They are ignoring serious police concerns about a widespread criminal element thriving in Ontario.

The minister has a secret report that uncovers a growing criminal element in Ontario's gaming industry. Will the government withdraw this video slot machine bill, a bill which will see the proliferation of some 20,000 video slot machines in bars and restaurants, until the people of Ontario have had the chance to see what the police have had to say about the new crimes that these slot machines will bring into their communities?

Hon Mr Runciman: It's a little awkward. Since the supplementary essentially deals with the VLT legislation, I'm going to refer it to the minister responsible.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all I'm going to give some credit where credit is due in this particular matter. The Gaming Control Commission, which was established in 1994 by the NDP government, gave the government, finally, some tools to deal with a previously unregulated area. In 1993, prior to the establishment of the Gaming Control Commission, there were only three charges laid in this field. In the last 12 months there have been over 300 charges laid due to the establishment of the Gaming Control Commission. Prior to its establishment as well, there were no restrictions on who could supply supplies or services to the casino. This was done in connection with the casino and the establishment of the casino.

There were some tools given, and certainly credit where credit is due, but I strongly believe that we have to provide tighter and more provisions to supervise and monitor this area, and that's exactly where we're heading with the establishment of the charity gaming halls.

Ms Castrilli: This is a lot of gobbledegook. This minister is saying to us, and he hasn't read the report, that he is going ahead with video slot machines regardless of the consequences. He's already said that 300 charges have been laid, yet he is proceeding. They're going to push forward with this because they are so starved for cash that they don't care about the consequences on people and on communities.

I ask the minister again, how can he possibly allow the largest proliferation of gambling in Ontario's history when he has a police report in his hand saying that criminals will profit? These aren't nice people. These are criminals. How can the minister go forward with video slot machines? How can you ignore this report?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I might start by reminding the member that it was the Peterson government that brought in these three-day roving Monte Carlos. These are the unregulated types of casinos that have been causing the problem in this province. As the member knows full well,

the complaint of the charities has been that at the end of a three-day casino, they have very little, if anything, left out of the proceeds of these particular types of roving casinos. The idea here is to bring in proper regulations to monitor these things closely, to make sure that charities do get the benefit of these particular casinos.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): It's the video slot machine that caused the problem, and you know it.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Essex South, come to order.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: This is clearly why we're bringing in the charity gaming halls, to make sure they are regulated.

In addition, as the newspaper clipping has said, "Most of these problems could be dealt with if the provincial government would devote resources to supervision." This is clearly what we're trying to get: better and more means to supervise and to take care of this problem. In fact it was really predicated by the Liberal government.

The Speaker: New question, the member for Downsview.

Ms Castrilli: I wonder how the minister knows what the problem is when he hasn't read the report.

The Speaker: Who is your question to?

Ms Castrilli: My question is to the Solicitor General, since he was so kind as to stand up before, and it's on the same subject. The minister is, as we know, the chief law officer of the province. This morning he told reporters he hadn't read the report, a report by the OPP which concluded that criminal elements are thriving in Ontario's gaming industry.

I really have to ask the minister, where has he been? The report is over a year old, a report that deals with criminal elements in our gaming industry, yet this government is proceeding with the largest proliferation of gaming in Ontario's history and he hasn't bothered to read the report.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Ms Castrilli: Where has he been?

Hon Mr Runciman: I indicated in the earlier question that this was not a government report and was not a report to government. This was a report commissioned by the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario and circulated to the membership of CISO, not a government report. It wasn't made available to me; it wasn't a report to government; it was an internal report within CISO.

Ms Castrilli: This is an OPP report. The OPP is part of the minister's ministry and responsibility. I find it unbelievable that he would not know what's going on in his own ministry. If half of what we have seen in the media is true, the report is damning. It says that organized crime is flourishing in Ontario, and the Solicitor General is doing nothing. He has not even read the report.

According to media reports, the secret report calls for more money, manpower and tougher enforcement. Otherwise, it concludes, legal gambling will continue operating under a façade of honesty and integrity. This is very serious indeed.

I ask the minister, will he, as the chief law officer in the province, demand that cabinet put their plans for video slot machines on hold until the people of Ontario

have a chance to see what the police have said about these crimes and these new slot machines and what the effect will be in their own communities?

Hon Mr Runciman: The report, as I said, was commissioned by CISO itself, and they do indeed have differing points of view within the policing community as well. I was given today a quote from Jim Szarka, who is the former deputy commissioner of the OPP. This is a quote from September 7, 1994, in the Kingston Whig-Standard. The former deputy commissioner of the OPP expressed this view: "You legalize this activity and you drum out that criminal element."

This was a report commissioned internally. There was a seconded police officer commissioned to carry this out for CISO. It was circulated, but if CISO indeed gave credence to this report, they haven't brought it forward to me to express grave concern related to the findings of the report.

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Ms Castrilli: I really have to ask whose side this minister is on and does he really know what's going on in his own ministry. He is supposed to be the person in government concerned about law and order. Here we have a police report that talks about organized crime in a growing sector, and he hasn't bothered to read it. The Premier hasn't read it; the Minister of Community and Social Services hasn't read it. This is a conspiracy of silence. I wonder if the minister is prepared to do his job. Will he do his job as the chief law enforcement officer of the province? Will he stop the government's plan with respect to video slot machines and will he call for an inquiry in this very serious matter? That's what we need at the moment, a public inquiry into organized crime and the gaming industry.

Hon Mr Runciman: I indicated to you earlier that this was not a government report, so I'm not going to apologize for not reading a report that was not made to me or to the government.

I will certainly be contacting the chair of Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, Mr Fantino, whom I speak with on a regular basis and meet with on a regular basis, and if indeed they give a great deal of merit to this report, it hasn't been brought to my attention by Mr Fantino or other members of CISO. Certainly, I will be pursuing it with him, and if he feels that these are matters that should be given consideration, we're quite prepared to do that. But this report has been apparently available for some period of time and Chief Fantino has not brought it to my attention.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is also for the Minister of Community and Social Services — sorry, Consumer and Commercial Relations, since he shuffled from ministries from now and then.

I want to ask the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations — because this is really quite unbelievable. You're going to bring 25,000 slot machines, video lottery terminals, into Ontario. You're going to bring them into neighbourhoods, next door to high schools and they're going to be widely available to the public. Yet there is a report by Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario which raises the issues of organized crime involvement with VLTs and you haven't read the report.

Let me ask you, Minister: Don't you think it's a good idea, as the minister responsible, that you should get hold of this report and read it and that other members of this Legislature should have a chance to read it before you proceed with bringing over 25,000 video lottery terminals into Ontario?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I do believe it is important to make sure that we listen and read what's out there and available. I'm not disagreeing with the leader of the third party. I disagree, however, before I get to that, with his characterization in terms of what the plan for video lottery terminals will be. Certainly, nowhere has anyone said they'll be proliferated through neighbourhoods. In fact, our implementation plan is quite different than how he's characterizing things. Not only have I tried to listen to a number of our caucus members in terms of the particular situation here with enforcement; I think it's very important —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I say right now that the reason why we are moving towards the charity gaming halls is to make sure that there is better enforcement, that there is better monitoring. We are looking to make better enforcement as well and to add on to what's currently there.

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations can quibble about how many video lottery terminals; he can quibble about that. The point is that we're talking about organized crime here. We're talking about people who get involved in gaming and gambling activities like video lottery terminals for the purpose of laundering their money from the drug trade or from other illegal activities. That's why this is so lucrative for them.

Are you telling me that this report is irrelevant to video lottery terminals, that this report is irrelevant to organized crime and organized crime involvement with video lottery terminals? Is that what you're telling the people of Ontario, that this is all irrelevant?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I certainly didn't say that. If I could once again refer to the Globe and Mail article, it says, "Most of these problems could be dealt with if the provincial government would devote resources to supervision." It goes on to say, "There must be an increase in [the] complement of dedicated investigators to ensure charitable gaming operations are conducted honestly," and that's a quote, apparently.

I agree that we should devote more resources to make sure that the grey machines are combated. It's very important to us, it's very important to members of my caucus and it's also very important for us to, once again, monitor and closely regulate the industry. This all speaks to this.

Mr Hampton: The minister stands here and says he's going to enforce and regulate, and he hasn't read the report, nor have they made the report available so that people would be able to know where the enforcement and regulations should be centred. This is absolutely unbelievable. We've got a minister of the crown here. He's got, available to the government, a very important report that has been organized and developed by Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, he hasn't bothered to read it and he won't make it available to others.

I've got a question for the minister again. On page 615 of the government phone book, under the Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services it says, "Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, 9th fl 25 Grosvenor St," government telephone number 314-3050. Why don't you call them up and say that because you're interested in the impact of video lottery terminals because you care about organized crime and video lottery terminals, you want a copy of this report? Why don't you do that? Other members have tried to do that. We've been denied. As minister, why don't you do that?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The leader of the third party has already had this question answered by the Solicitor General, certainly if he was listening to the question asked by the opposition. But he did ask a very good question in there, "How would I know what areas to enforce?"

Mr Hampton: Page 615, 314-3050.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I will point out one of the areas that we should enforce.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Thank you for the reading lesson. I was just indicating that there is an area which we should enforce, and that was a question that was asked by the leader of the third party.

The leader of the third party will remember that when they introduced the Gaming Control Act they had grandfathered through all the registrants without making the proper type of investigation.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the minister. I would ask that all members come —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know you're having difficulty hearing that.

If the leader of the third party wants to know what areas we should enforce, one is the fact that their government grandfathered through all the registrants without making security checks on them. That has required our government to go back and make sure all the people they let go through as registrants are properly checked out. We believe it's important to have these people screened. Obviously they did not.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr Hampton: Page, do you want to take this over to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, so that he'll have it. It's a phone book to call the number in the government.

1430

ADULT EDUCATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is for the Minister of Education. Today the Premier is quoted in the press as saying, and I can paraphrase him, "It's not our intention to ever endorse somebody breaking the law or taking away services to people."

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation released survey results this morning. It shows that hundreds of adult Ontarians are being denied their rights to a high school education, rights that are set out in the Education Act. Cutbacks by your government in the grant for adult students has forced boards of education to eliminate adult education programs. So as a result, adult students can't get the education they need to get back into the workforce.

I ask the minister, who is enforcing the Education Act in this province? Who is policing your ministry to ensure that you obey the Education Act and you provide the services that you are supposed to?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I want to thank the leader of the third party for the question. His allegations are simply wrong. This government has done more to support adult education over the last year than the previous government did in five years. Finally, for the first time in this province, we have expanded the general educational development testing program which allows adults to get high school certification when they have prior learning that equals that level of accreditation.

I doubt that there's any single person in the province of Ontario who would not understand, and surely the leader of the third party would be included in that group, that there is a difference between adult education and adolescent education and surely we should have our programs designed for the specific needs of adult education and that is what we have done. We are certainly in compliance with the Education Act.

Mr Hampton: I'm talking about the act. The act happens to be the law in Ontario. I'm not talking about what the minister's spin doctors may be telling him for the day. I'm talking about the law and the law says that people are entitled to a high school education and this minister has made cuts so that there are all kinds of adults in the province who can no longer get that high school education as they want to get back into the workforce.

The OSSTF found that of almost 8,000 adult students surveyed last spring, 2,800 had been told that their required course would no longer be available this fall and almost two thirds of them were not offered any alternative to complete their course of study. So I want to say to the minister, your government is taking away from people in need. You're taking away from people who want to get back into the education system, who want to get high school credits so they can get a job. You're taking that away from them.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hampton: You can't blame the situation at the doors of the boards of education. You cut the grants for adult students.

What are you going to do to ensure that adults are receiving the education to which they are entitled by Ontario law? What are you going to do to make sure that the law is observed?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I want to assure the member opposite, as I just have, that the law is not being violated or broken in the province of Ontario. I can tell him this, that there is a significant difference in delivering adult

education and adolescent education. There are some people who would like to have the same programs that were designed for adolescents be applied to adults. I don't think that's logical, I don't think that makes sense and I don't think that meets the needs of adults.

I'm proud of this government's record and I'm proud of the fact that unlike the member opposite's government, we have allowed adults across this province the opportunity to get GED approval like everyone else in every other province and every state in North America. Finally we've joined the group.

Mr Hampton: Once again we've got the Conservative spin doctors. Let me tell the minister, we know what's happened. You cut adult education so you could fund a tax break for your wealthy friends. That's what's happened.

Let me tell you who you're leaving behind. Of the adult students who have been eliminated, 63% are women trying to get back into the workforce. Many are people with physical disabilities who want to get adult education so they can get a job. Those are the people you're cutting in order that you can give your wealthy friends a tax break.

Of the students surveyed, 48% are either on unemployment insurance or have been forced on to social assistance. They want to get off. What you're doing is making sure they stay unemployed. You're making sure they're forced on to social assistance. What are you going to do to observe the law? What are you going to do to ensure that people who want to get a job, who want to get back into the workforce, get the education they're entitled to by the Education Act?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Let me assure the leader of the third party one more time that the law is being met in the province of Ontario. Let me also assure him that this government will not try to supply adult education in one model designed for adolescents. We are going to provide, and we are providing, adults with many opportunities tailored to their needs.

As to the question that the honourable member has suggested about the cost of education, about the affordability of education, the honourable member's party was willing to pass the bill for education on to the children of this province. This government will not.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is to the Solicitor General. Clearly the Harris government has made a very significant error in proceeding with 20,000 video lottery terminals in Ontario without looking at an extremely important report. I know from being in this House that the present Treasurer and the Premier and so on were very much opposed to an expansion of gambling in this province. They had good reason to be opposed to that. One of the reasons could be what is contained in this report. As the chief law officer of the crown, as the chief police officer in the province of Ontario, can you tell us why, when you knew this report existed, you would not apprise yourself of the contents of this report so that you could share with members of the cabinet any concerns you might have about gambling

activities in this province and caution them against proceeding with the implementation of 20,000 VLTs in bars and restaurants in every neighbourhood in Ontario?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I indicated earlier that this is an operational intelligence document. It contains very sensitive intelligence information. These reports can identify very specific targets and individuals, and they are traditionally not circulated outside the law enforcement community. That is standard practice. It was standard practice when the Liberals were in power. It was standard practice when the NDP were in government. This hasn't changed. They were not released under previous governments. That's the standard practice. But I'm certainly prepared to talk to Chief Fantino. It is a CISO report.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): You can get a briefing. What are you doing out there?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

Hon Mr Runciman: It is not a government report. If Chief Fantino and the board of CISO are prepared to release this publicly, given the fact that apparently there is a copy in the hands of the media, I will be supportive of that. But it is not my report to release.

Mr Bradley: I find it difficult to believe that an individual who pursued issues of policing and justice so vigorously — and I commend you — when you were in opposition and demanded extremely high standards of others in this House would stand before this House today and wash your hands of this particular problem and say that report isn't yours. I'm surprised as well that you would not report to the House that Clare Lewis, the chair of the Gaming Control Commission of Ontario, wouldn't have this report available to him.

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Minister, with the revelations that have come forward, do you not believe now that you should ask the Premier to call for a full public inquiry into gambling activities in Ontario and that you should ask the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations to withdraw his bill allowing video slot machines in virtually every neighbourhood in this province until such time as you're satisfied that the air has been cleared in all allegations related to gambling in this province?

Hon Mr Runciman: I've certainly taken strong positions on justice issues in the past and I continue to do that. With respect to this particular matter, as I indicated, I've met with Chief Fantino and other members of the CISO board on a number of occasions since taking over this office. If this was such a strong concern, we have not spoken about specific concerns about VLT legislation.

This member indicates to me that they put in roving Monte Carlos. We are moving to institute much stricter regulations of that kind of gambling in this province. The Treasurer has indicated that we're going to put the necessary resources into this area to ensure that appropriate policing is carried out. We are moving on these issues.

I can't speak to the specifics of this report. It's a CISO report. I have not read it, but I've indicated to the member today that I'm quite prepared to talk to Chief

Fantino about releasing it. He may be quite prepared, his colleagues in CISO may be quite prepared —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: One of the things that I think CISO is very proud of is its arm's length from government, its independence.

Again, we hear on a regular basis, if there's any question about this government or this minister interfering in operational matters of police, they're very quick to condemn me or condemn this government, and now they're encouraging me to be involved in operational matters.

The Speaker: The question has been answered.

AUTO INDUSTRY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): I have a question to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Your colleague the member for Durham East was quoted yesterday in his statements endorsing the General Motors position of outsourcing and pay reductions as saying the following: "I realize GM has to outsource. Is it better to have 100 jobs at \$24 an hour or 200 jobs at \$12 an hour? Full employment is the ideal state." Do you agree with that industrial strategy and position taken by your colleague?

Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism): Naturally, like all members in the House today I'm very concerned about the situation in Oshawa with the strike. That is a very important employer for Ontario labour. As a matter of fact, the automotive industry is our most important job creator, and also from a dollars point of view our biggest export. So we're very concerned about what's going on down there and I hope there's going to be a very timely resolution of the situation. We're watching it very closely and we're very concerned.

Mr Cooke: I'd like to ask the minister again, is he prepared here today in the House to say that he will not endorse the statement by his colleague from Oshawa, from Durham East?

Secondly, would he not agree with this caucus that when you have a corporation like General Motors that made \$1.4 billion last year, the largest profit rate of any corporation in the history of this country, a corporation that already has many more of its parts outsourced than its parent corporation in the United States, would the minister not play a more constructive role in here today and say to General Motors that it's time to be a good corporate citizen and settle the strike at the bargaining table and be fair to the workers that have made that \$1.4 billion in profit?

Hon Mr Saunderson: Mr Speaker, before answering the question I want to congratulate you — I did not have a chance to do it earlier — on your appointment as Speaker. I'm sure you'll bring honour to the job, and I'm looking forward to working with you.

I want the member to be aware that what we're creating in this province is a province of opportunity.

Mr Cooke: Low-wage.

Hon Mr Saunderson: No, we're not. We have very good economic programs. Since we have taken office

there have been 150,000 jobs created in this province, and we're very proud of that.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Tell me what he can prove. You have a tax cut for the wealthy.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Saunderson: I'm quite convinced that our policies are making this happen in this province.

As for interfering with the situation in Oshawa, we have no intention of doing that. We're quite confident that there will be a peaceful resolution to this and that Ontario will go on being the engine of growth in this country it has now become.

ALZHEIMER DISEASE

Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East): Mr Speaker, my congratulations to you. I've noticed that my seat up here is a little cooler than the one you're sitting in today.

I would like to put this question to the Minister responsible for seniors, a question I find quite important actually. In Ontario today, between 80,000 and 100,000 people have Alzheimer disease or related dementia. Currently 90% of the care in the community for people with this disease is provided by the family caregivers in their homes.

However, such care of course, as you know, comes very high. It's a high cost for providers. There's the extra burden of paying for respite, and for medical and legal services as well. There's the ongoing physical, mental and emotional stress of providing around-the-clock care to a loved one who at times cannot even recognize the member of the family. I would like to know what reassurance you can give seniors that the government will help support families in these straits.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): I'd like to thank my colleague the member for Wentworth East for his question. I want to indicate to him that the province of Ontario will be providing leadership in this important area. My colleague the Minister of Health attended a meeting in Fredericton of provincial, federal and territorial ministers of health responsible for seniors. They discussed the issue of Alzheimer's research and coordination, and it was found that we lack an integrated framework and a structure for this disease in terms of public policy. I'm pleased that Ontario stepped forward to show leadership in this important area. We've begun partnerships with the Alzheimer Association of Ontario and are working cooperatively with support families, caregivers, professionals and people afflicted by this terrible disease.

The work has begun. My colleague Helen Johns, who's the Minister of Health's parliamentary assistant, has already begun discussions and consultations. A report will be ready within a couple of weeks. But this government is very much committed to a coordinated, integrated program for Alzheimer's.

Mr Doyle: Much has been said in recent days about restructuring health care, shifting money away from bricks and mortar and directing it to front-line health service. The opposition parties have expressed concern that more funds are being taken out of the system than

are being put back into community health services. How do we know that this government will provide the resources to build the kind of services that you've described for families and people with Alzheimer's?

Hon Mr Jackson: This government is very committed to cost-effective, innovative health care reform for Ontarians, especially as it relates to senior citizens, and that's why we are working so cooperatively with the Alzheimer Association of Ontario with this integrated strategy. I had a recent meeting with John Ellis, its executive director, and he was expressing genuine appreciation for the renewed efforts that this government is making in terms of pilot projects, as well as actual projects that were being announced. He referred to a front-line service that our government announced this week, an investment of \$3.2 million in capital to build a supportive housing complex in Elliot Lake. This will provide the housing for 38 frail elderly and onsite services for many more seniors to lead independent lives. It will also have a specialized program for 12 Alzheimer residents.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Mr Jackson: This is cost-effective and is community-driven health care for seniors, something this government and this Minister of Health are committed to and that the seniors in this province deserve.

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VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a question to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Since you've become responsible for video slot machines in this province, the Legislature and the standing committee on administration of justice have not heard how you feel. I know you to be an honourable and honest person. I'd like to know today, do you favour the introduction of video slot machines in the province of Ontario?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I've said before that I guess I have policies and not personal opinions any more. The people over there have a lot of personal opinions.

We're reacting right now to a request and a demand by charities and certainly by the hospitality trade and racetracks to have an opportunity to bolster the hospitality trade, to assist charities as well. It's clear that there is a request from the community out there to participate.

Mr Crozier: There's an equal if not greater request that you not introduce slot machines in the province of Ontario. We've heard today and yesterday of a report that exists that will tell you that if you legalize these machines — the criminal element in the province of Ontario is simply waiting patiently for you to do it because it's going to be of benefit to them.

We've heard you stand there and say, "If I see no evil or hear no evil, I don't have to speak any evil." Will you please get together with the Solicitor General and ask that at the very least cabinet be given a briefing, and then, from what you hear in that report —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Crozier: — if it's appropriate, will you consider withdrawing or delaying the introduction of your bill till

an inquiry can be held into criminal elements in gambling in the province?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I find it a little peculiar that this particular member is asking what he's asking right now. If I might refer to the Windsor Star on May 24, 1996, it indicates: "Crozier says he supports redevelopment for Boblo, including a casino." In reaction to Mr Maris, who was the NDP candidate and who said that the Liberals opposed the gaming house, Mr Crozier said, "This is totally untrue."

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Continue, Minister.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Because I was drowned out, I just want to finish this. In reaction to a campaign flyer back in the election with Mr Maris, Mr Crozier denied the fact that the Liberals opposed gaming houses. He said that was untrue. Which is it? It's kind of like another flip-flop again.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): You can't be allowed to misrepresent opinions. You're putting them in every bar and restaurant —

The Speaker: Point of privilege? Order, the member for St Catharines. If you want a point of privilege, I'll take it up after question period. That's the most appropriate time.

Next question, please; leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have another question for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, because what's happening here today is unbelievable. The minister would know that last night on a nationally televised news program, W Five, the CTV television network raised the issue, their concern over the involvement of organized crime in video lottery terminals.

The Treasurer, the Minister of Finance — March 24, 1996, Toronto Sun — said, "Lots of other provinces have introduced VLTs and lots of other provinces have problems with VLTs."

University of Ottawa criminologist Ross Hastings says, "The upper echelons of organized crime are not losing any sleep over the government's decision to legalize the video lottery terminals." He goes on to say, "Legal gambling could be a way for illegal gamblers to launder their money." Everybody else around you is raising Caution signs. They're saying this is not the way to go.

The Speaker: The question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Don't you think you should ask for a copy of this report and read it and make it available?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly I've said before that it's very important for us to bring in the proper regulatory means to monitor and control this industry. I've also said that it's very important for us to make sure we have better resources to deal with this particular problem.

I remind the members over there, because they're saying that we are somehow proliferating gambling, that when they introduced the casino, in connection to questioning their motivations at that time, the minister then was Marilyn Churley, who said: "Pick up the phone and call Premier Filmon of Manitoba. Tell him the three casinos his government owns are fronts for the mob. Tell Premier Bourassa that he is about to become some

undercover ringleader." This is what Ms Churley indicated in connection with and in response to people who opposed Bill 8.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): This guy's a joke. He's a joke.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Algoma, come to order. Supplementary, the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: We know the conundrum the government has got. They've given a big tax break to their wealthy friends and now they've got to find a way to get that money. They don't care if it involves organized crime. They don't care about organized crime in VLTs.

Let me try again. I want to quote from the report of the Fredericton criminal intelligence unit, the Fredericton Police Force. This is what they say: "The issue of slot machine, one-armed bandit and poker machine gambling has long been known to be associated with organized crime. In recent years confirmed intelligence reports have linked video lottery gambling and the purchasing of the devices to organized crime."

Minister, how many criminologists, how many police forces have to speak up? Why won't you get a copy of this report? Why won't you hold off introducing third reading of the bill until you've done the responsible thing, got a copy of the report and read it?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Certainly part of what we have to do in our implementation strategy is address this particular problem.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): If you don't read your report —

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): What's he got, a crystal ball?

The Speaker: The members for Cochrane South and Hamilton Centre, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: For example, by combining in Bill 75 the functions of the LLBO and the GCC into one regulatory function, we bring on more inspectors to direct towards this problem.

Clearly we have a commitment to tighten up the regulations and try to enforce this a lot better than has been done over the last 10 years.

1500

GROW ONTARIO

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The Grow Ontario program was announced as part of the budget in 1996. This \$15-million initiative focuses on market development, research and technology transfer, rural economic development and investment attraction. Minister, how many proposals have you received and how are you selecting which proposals to fund?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your ascension to this very famous throne.

To the honourable member for Halton North, I know his concerns regarding the agricultural community and I appreciate that. I'm very pleased to report that this \$15-million Grow Ontario program has been very well received by the rural agrifood community of the province of Ontario.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): the VLTs are obviously well received by the mob.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'm going to warn the member for Algoma to come to order; it's just that simple. I'm having a very difficult time hearing the minister.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The farming community now has over 50 applications. We now have a panel of six independent agrifood sector people involved in assessing the applications that are in place and we anticipate that by the middle of next month we will have a number of contracts which will have been issued and we will be proceeding with this very positive, new money to the agrifood producers of the province of Ontario.

Mr Chudleigh: Minister, thank you very much for the update. Until when can applications be submitted and what are the primary requirements for the applicants?

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The next deadline for the Grow Ontario program will be November 1 and the following one will be on January 1. We certainly encourage investment in agriculture because presently we export \$4.8 billion from Ontario in the agrifood sector. This program will assist us in going close to doubling that amount of exports of agrifood products to the world within the next five years. I want to simply add that the \$20 million that's been earmarked towards the provincial sales tax rebate on capital improvements has been oversubscribed. That's how well received \$35 million of new money to agriculture has happened. So I am very proud to bring good news to my colleagues.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Today Ian Ricci, who is a 17-year-old student from Carleton Place High School, came all the way into town and held a press conference to talk about his concern about education at his particular school. For Ian and his classmates, portable classrooms in need of repair, inadequate space for technical studies, a building that's inaccessible to the disabled, a library that does not meet the space requirements of the ministry, inadequate guidance and office space, inadequate cafeteria facilities requiring students to start their lunch at 10:10 in the morning —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Patten: Minister, you've taken hundreds of millions of dollars out of the education system. Can you now see that your decision to take this money out is impacting in a negative manner on schools like Carleton Place High School?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I want to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for the question. I had the pleasure of meeting the student he just referred to a little while before question period and I can certainly assure the member opposite that it was a very nice experience for me; certainly an articulate young man.

As to the question from the member, I'm glad that he shares my concern and our government's concern for the

condition of some of the capital structure of the schools in Ontario. During the previous Liberal government, during the last government's tenure, over that course of 10 years, the number of portables, and I know the member mentioned this, in Ontario grew by almost 8,000, almost 8,000 additional portables —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Snobelen: — in our school system in that time of your government being in power and your government being in power.

What was the answer of the previous governments? To drive up the debt they load on our students and to announce projects for which there was no funding. That was the response. We have taken the approach of having a new look at capital construction so we can meet the past demand designed by your government and your government, sir.

Mr Patten: I would like to pass over a videotape that was filmed and created by Ian and some other students at his school. You'll see for yourself, not just hear about it at second hand, the condition of this particular school. One of the reasons they've not been able to bring it up to standard as required by the Ministry of Education is because of the freeze, and you keep saying that you are not touching the classroom. This young man is saying you are touching the classroom, his education and his colleagues in that particular school, and I venture to say it's not the only one.

Will you agree today that the freeze will only be for this year or will be taken off immediately, and will you make sure that the schools that are in the same kind of situation will have the opportunity to come up to the standards of your ministry?

Hon Mr Snobelen: I want to assure the member opposite that we are currently, as we have said to the people of Ontario and as we promised them, doing a very senior consulting project with the ECS on what are the alternatives for capital construction of schools in the province of Ontario, looking at what other jurisdictions are doing, so that when we exit the moratorium, and I can assure the member opposite that we will, we will do so with a plan to help erase the backlog of capital neglect that has been visited upon our students and our schools over the last 10 years. It's a monumental task, but we will address it and we will solve it.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'd just like to take this quick opportunity to introduce the guests, to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a Cuban delegation accompanied by His Excellency Bienvenido Garcia Negrin, ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Canada, and Mr José Garcia, consul general. Welcome.

ACID GAS EMISSION CONTROL

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I have a question for the Minister of Environment and Energy. I know he was here earlier and the schedule says that he's supposed to be here.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): You've got the choice of asking the question of other ones or standing it down.

Mr Silipo: I will put it to him if he's here. If not, I will put it to someone else.

The Speaker: I don't see him.

Mr Silipo: What do you wish me to do?

The Speaker: You have the choice of either referring it to another minister or standing it down. I doubt we'll get to it today if you stand it down, so I suggest —

Interjection.

The Speaker: That's right, and as I suggest not standing it down, the minister walks in.

Mr Silipo: Minister, as you may know, the Sierra Club of Eastern Canada this morning held a press conference in which they stated that proposals in a document that was released by your predecessor, Responsive Environmental Protection, would allow acid rain emissions in Metro Toronto to double. That's because you are in the process of getting rid of a regulation that goes back to the time of Bill Davis, regulation 361, which now limits the sulphur content of the most widely used heating and industrial boiler oil and fuel oil used in Metro by, I gather, among others, some 75,000 to 100,000 homes. This will double, quite simply, the amount of acid rain emissions.

I just want to ask you very briefly, why would your government proceed and why would you, as somebody who calls himself a minister in favour of the environment, proceed with such a regulation that would allow twice the amount of acid rain in Metropolitan Toronto?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'm glad the question was asked and I truly thank the member for asking it because I want to clarify the situation. The report that was written talked about these two particular regulations. It's a very complex situation, but I want to give the member my word, and members of the Legislature this word, that this minister will not increase any of the standards which are located in either of those regulations. So the net effect with regard to these two regulations will, at the very least, be as good as the combination of the two or better.
1510

Mr Silipo: I want to be really clear and I want the minister to be clear that what he's saying is that he's going to review the situation to ensure that, in effect, this regulation does not proceed. If it does, and if you change it to the other regulation that applies for the province, it's our understanding that in fact that does increase the amount of sulphur dioxide that's allowed to be emitted, and that is the basic problem, Minister. What we need from you and what people out there need from you is to hear that you're going to review the situation and leave in place this regulation which right now controls at least to some reasonable level the amount of acid-rain-causing sulphur dioxide emissions.

Hon Mr Sterling: I want to make it clear to the member that part of the confusion was caused by the way this particular document was written. Therefore I want to make it clear to you and to the Sierra Club, who I will be glad to meet with — they asked to meet with me, and I will be happy to meet with them and talk about this

issue — that there are two regulations with regard to sulphur dioxide emissions, one covering the greater Toronto area and one covering the rest of Ontario. It's my intention to have the same sulphur dioxide emission tests or standards for all of Ontario but that they be to the lowest common denominator.

The misunderstanding by the Sierra Club and by several writers with regard to this issue is well understood by me because the document written by the ministry was misleading and misrepresented the issue. As I've said to you before —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Sterling: — the bottom line is that none of the sulphur dioxide allowances will be increased.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 34(a), I wish to advise you I'm not satisfied with the response to my oral question from the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and it's my intention to raise the subject matter of the question at the adjournment of the House tomorrow night.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): If you file the proper papers, it will happen.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICERS

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): This is a motion pursuant to discussions we've had with regard to the Deputy Speaker's position and agreed upon by all parties.

That notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 3, 1995, Mr Morin, member for the electoral district of Carleton East, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the committee of the whole House; that Ms Churley, member for the electoral district of Riverdale, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House; and that Mr Johnson, member for the electoral district of Perth, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Any debate?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): With regard to the motion, the government House leader is correct and we are in full agreement with the motion. I just wanted to make the point that while the motion does not talk about dates, our understanding is that this will remain in effect for one year and that subsequently there will be a further rotation and Ms Churley, the member for the electoral district of Riverdale, will be moved to Deputy Speaker.

Hon David Johnson: Just to respond to that, that is also my understanding, to put that in the record, that in fact this would be for a period of one year and Ms Churley would then assume the Deputy Speaker's position, or whoever was representative from the third party.

The Speaker: Shall the motion carry? Carried.

PETITIONS

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition from the Union of Veterans Affairs Employees in Ottawa; Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees Union, Local 75, Don Mills; Humber College employees, and SEIU, Local 528, Mississauga:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I continue to support those workers, and I add my name to theirs.

PAROLE SYSTEM

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I have with me a petition signed by several members from my riding:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative government has passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that convicted murderers serve their entire sentences; and

"Whereas convicted first-degree murderers are allowed to apply to the court for a reduction of the parole ineligibility period; and

"Whereas victims' families must relive the horrors of the original crime through a jury hearing for this early parole and relive this every time the killer is given hearings for early parole; and

"Whereas the provincial government must bear a large degree of the costs involved with a jury hearing;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Attorney General of Ontario to request the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to reconsider his decision under Bill C-45 and to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada."

I affix my signature.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which I wish to read:

"Whereas the government is intent on cutting educational funding so that children are denied their basic right to quality education; and

"Whereas the government cuts to day care facilities restrict parents' access to affordable and decent child care programs within the province; and

"Whereas the Harris government is intent on abolishing rent control and the rent-geared-to-income program, which provide decent housing for low- and middle-income tenants consisting of 40% seniors, 42% families and 18% special needs and disabled tenants; and

"Whereas the government has introduced user fees on basic necessities such as prescription medication for seniors, textbooks for school children and essential services like firefighting and policing; and

"Whereas the cuts to services will impact upon everything from public transit to borrowing library books; and

"Whereas the government has seen fit to abandon job training programs and failed to create a formal job strategy for the province despite continually high unemployment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Mike Harris government to live up to their promises of protecting rent control, not introducing user fees, and creating the over 725,000 jobs which he promised."

FIREFIGHTING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): This is a petition to the government of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Atikokan and surrounding areas, petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"To reopen and keep open the MNR fire base at Nym Lake;

"Whereas the town of Atikokan is surrounded by forested lands and is dependent upon a quick response by Ministry of Natural Resources fire crews at the outbreak of forest fires in order to ensure the safety of our community and other dwellings and vested interests in the area, as well as to maintain our livelihoods made largely possible by our forest resources."

I agree with this petition and I have affixed my signature to it.

1520

QUEENSWAY GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): Today I wish to present a petition to the Legislature. It's on a subject that's dear to your heart and mine, Mr Speaker. The petition is against the closure of Queensway General Hospital. The preamble reads:

"As a community member who depends on Queensway General Hospital for health care services, I am very concerned about the rumour of possible closure published in the August 13, 1996 edition of the Toronto Star.

"I need my community hospital. I am very opposed to having it closed."

The point that I'd like to make here is that this is not a political group; this is a group that very quietly went about collecting these signatures. They realize it's a rumour, but they're very concerned nevertheless. They took the petition to the mayor of Etobicoke and I was able to retrieve it from him. The interesting point is there are 20,541 signatures and I think that's very significant. I'd like to affix my signature to it in support.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Scarborough North.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I've been standing up here from the very beginning today, Mr Speaker. I'm very much afraid the clock will run out, and my residents are waiting for this petition.

The Speaker: Although, the member for Parkdale, you may be the only one who considers that a point of order, it just isn't a point of order and I'm just going in rotation. The member for Scarborough North next, please.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): Thank you for your fairness and your consistency, Mr Speaker.

I have a petition from Sault Ste Marie, a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants and allows for security and stability in their homes and communities; and

"Whereas lifting rent control in Ontario would leave tenants with uncontrollable rent increases and financial instability; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favouring easier and faster eviction by landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to save rent control."

Hundreds have signed their names to this petition and I will affix mine in agreement.

BEAR HUNTING

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned bears do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of bait and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

This petition is signed by 339 people who live in North Bay and Sudbury, and I have affixed my signature to it.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

This is signed by 466 people and I affix my signature.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I have a petition to the government of Ontario:

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse and crimes such as embezzlement and robbery; and

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling

with widespread temptation and will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for so many years to come; and

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across our province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and the desperate in order that the government can cut income taxes, to the greatest benefit of those with the highest income; and

"Since the placement of video lottery terminals in bars in Ontario and in permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since Premier Harris and Finance Minister Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations,

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province."

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have thousands of petitions, further petitions actually, from members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1008 submitted to me by their president Dan Gilbert and their union representative Pearl MacKay. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the proposed changes to workers' compensation in Ontario, including the elimination of the current bipartite board of directors, the reduction of temporary benefits from 90% to 85%, the introduction of an unpaid waiting period for compensation benefits, legislated limits on entitlement, including repetitive strain, chronic pain and stress claims, reduced permanent pensions and pension supplements. Workers' compensation is not a handout. It is a legal obligation that the employers of this province have to workers in Ontario.

"We, therefore, demand no reduction in existing benefits, improved vocational rehabilitation, tightened enforcement of health and safety to prevent accidents, no reduction in current staff levels at the WCB, and continued support for the bipartite board structure."

I add my name to theirs in support.

SCHOOL PRAYERS

Mrs Helen Johns (Huron): I have a petition here to reinstate the repeating of the Lord's Prayer in our elementary and secondary schools:

"Canada was founded on Christian-Judaeo principles. While the multicultural mosaic of our nation is clearly recognized and celebrated, we, the undersigned citizens concerned about the lack of religious content within the public education system, implore the government of Ontario to give serious consideration to the return of the Lord's Prayer in the classrooms of our schools. Since the

content of the prayer should not be offensive to any religious tradition or nationality, the intent is not to impose one particular belief but rather to maintain the foundations upon which our country was founded."

In my community we now have 700 signatures on this.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East): This petition is addressed to the government of Ontario:

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse, and crimes such as embezzlement and robbery; and

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling with widespread temptation and will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for many years to come; and

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across the province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable and the desperate in order that the government can cut income tax to the greatest benefit of those with the highest incomes; and

"Since the placement of video lottery terminals in bars in Ontario and in permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since the Premier and Finance Minister Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations,

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province of Ontario."

I have signed that petition.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr Patten from the standing committee on social development presented the following report and moved its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act / Projet de loi 76, Loi visant à améliorer la protection de l'environnement, à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes et à intégrer la consultation publique à la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Shall Bill 76 be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

1530

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 20th report.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt): It's simply a report of the committee meeting on government agencies that was held this morning, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

LOI MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR

Mr Crozier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act / Projet de loi 83, Loi de 1996 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Do you have any statements, member for Essex South?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Just a brief one. The purpose of this bill is to extend the scope of protection provided to consumers under the Consumer Protection Act to include protection from the practice of negative billing with respect to the provision of services.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Mr David Johnson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning electoral representation / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.

Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Government House Leader): It's a pleasure for me to say a few words about Bill 81 this afternoon. Bill 81, I guess, as one can infer from the title, the Fewer Politicians Act, is one that will reduce the number of ridings in the province of Ontario from 130

down to 103. I hope that over the course of this discussion we can demonstrate, number one, that this was a commitment that was made in the last election, even before the last election — the party now forming the government made a commitment to the people of Ontario to pursue this course of action; secondly, that we hope to accomplish in passing this bill that the electoral situation, that the riding situation will be more understandable, that there will be a higher level of accountability in government; thirdly, that to us this is a form of leadership, because we are asking the civil service to do better with less, many in Ontario in the private sector have had to do better with less, and we feel, as members of the government, that the government should also do better with less and that this will lead to not only a cost reduction but a more efficient and effective government.

The roots of this suggestion, I might say, came almost three years ago, and that was before the party which now forms the government released the Common Sense Revolution. During that period of time there was a great deal of consultation with people all across the province of Ontario about what in general was needed to restore hope and opportunity and prosperity to Ontario. The comments that were received at that time from residents all across Ontario have guided this government since the election on June 8 of last year and will continue to guide us in the future.

The people of Ontario, I might say, I'm sure are telling people on both sides of this House, hardworking people of the province of Ontario, that they wanted a government which would provide that leadership, that leadership in having a better government, a government that displays a commitment to its goals and its plans. On too many occasions in the past, governments have laid out goals and plans before an election but then they have not pursued them; they have let them go. People don't want to see that. They want a government that shows fiscal responsibility in achieving their goals. Ontarians also want a government that is understandable and approachable and which works.

These were the kind of attributes that we heard from the people of the province of Ontario. They also told us that governments lacked accountability, that taxes were too high, that spending was too high and indeed was out of control. Government was too big and government was too costly. Many people, I might say, were tired of footing the bill for governments that would not listen or respond to the needs and concerns of the average people, the grass-roots people of the province of Ontario.

Now, how to address this? Will adding more politicians address this? Will adding more programs, will spending more money address these concerns of the people of the province of Ontario? I'm sure that unanimously in this House we would say no, that adding more politicians, adding more costs will not address the concerns that people have expressed.

Two years ago this party now forming the government promised a smaller province from an elected point of view, a more efficient and a more affordable government at all levels, a better and more open government. That's what we are trying to deliver. That's what I feel we can deliver as part of our program through the Fewer Politi-

cians Act. We're making good on that promise. We're living up to our commitment.

I would say that this is another step to reducing the size and the cost of the government, to do better with less. I think the people of the province of Ontario have heard the motto of this government — to do better with less — and that's what this is all about. We will reduce the size of the government for the first time since 1933, and it has been done before. It was done in 1933, when at that time the Legislature was reduced from 112 seats down to 90. If one works that out, as I'm sure the opposition parties are doing mentally, that's about a 20% reduction in the number of seats, which is almost precisely what we're proposing through this bill today, about a 20% reduction.

In 1933 the politicians were concerned about the reduction from 112 to 90 seats. Some of them said it would not work. Some of them said that 90 politicians were not enough to run the province of Ontario, that Ontario couldn't possibly succeed. But nevertheless, the Legislature at that time had the foresight to go ahead, put that into effect. What happened since 1933? What happened in the years after 1933?

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): The population grew.

Hon David Johnson: The population grew, but in addition to that, we went through the most prosperous times for many years in the province of Ontario. I think we would all agree that the prosperity enjoyed and the standard of living in the province of Ontario was second to none. This was done with a base of 90 members. Fewer MPPs, I might say, also means fewer salaries, fewer staff members. We estimate that through this process over \$11 million will be directly saved, and added savings, I will say, over the next several years will also be saved in regard to adjustments to other factors, factors such as, of course, office space, telephone and computer systems etc.

Now to be fair, we're not cutting —

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): He's cutting my job. There'll be no one to represent the people of Lake Nipigon.

Hon David Johnson: We're not cutting anybody's job, to the member opposite, in the sense that no members will lose their seat before the next election. That would not be fair, because the people did vote them in. These changes, of course, will take effect after the next election is called.

1540

However, we're not introducing this legislation primarily to save money. The important part here is that by harmonizing our boundaries with the federal government we will reduce the complexity of the existing political system and make the system more transparent, more accountable and more understandable to the people of the province of Ontario.

For example, in the south end of my riding, in a portion of East York, some of the residents live in one federal riding, Don Valley East, and some live in another riding, Beaches-Woodbine. There is always confusion, because the same people who live in one provincial riding, and right across the street from one another, live

in two federal ridings. This involves confusion. There are allegiances etc which develop, and they're broken by this confusion. Clarity, simplicity and a more understandable and more workable system for the people of Ontario, whom we are elected to serve, are important to us, the most important part of this bill.

I might also say that aligning the provincial boundaries with the new federal ridings will help eliminate not only the overlap but the duplication in areas of staffing associated with the elections — one set of staff at the federal level and another set of staff at the provincial level. Hopefully, in working with the federal government — and I understand that the federal government is very sincere and interested in working with the provincial government in this respect — we will be able to combine and have one less bureaucracy. Perhaps the federal government would administer the elections and we would contract. Perhaps the provincial government would look after the elections and we would be able to contract services to the federal government. This could be a further saving of some \$2 million.

Reducing the number of provincial politicians sends a strong signal to the voters, the people of Ontario, the taxpayers, that this government is prepared to establish leadership, to start from the top. We are not asking the people to foot the burden or the civil service to foot the burden; we are showing leadership in saying that we are prepared to reduce our own ranks, to do better with less, to become more efficient. I believe we can be more effective. This step, together with others we've taken since we took office over a year ago, means that the restraint will be shouldered from the highest level here at Queen's Park right on down. It proves that this government is not afraid of taking the tough decisions.

Mr Pouliot: How much did you pay to rent that trailer?

Hon David Johnson: Referring to that trailer, Premier Harris has indicated that there is no such thing as "my riding." Each of us in this House should not look on a riding as our riding; the ridings belong to the people of Ontario, not to the politicians. I believe that at the end of this debate we will all say that the ridings belong to the people. The concern should not necessarily be for the future of the politicians. I may lose my riding, but it isn't my riding; it belongs to the people. I'm privileged to represent the people during this term.

Mr Pouliot: And very lucky.

Hon David Johnson: Very lucky and very privileged and very honoured. But if people have a different view next time, then so be it. We will all run in the next election, whether we're from the governing party, the official opposition or the third party. Many independent candidates run. It will be a challenge with only 103 ridings as opposed to 130, but that's not what this is about. This whole issue is about accountability, establishing the leadership and making the situation clear and more understandable to the people of Ontario. Reducing the number of MPPs by 20% will set the example of cost cutting for other levels of government, the agencies and the ministries, because we know we need the cooperation of all the ministries and the agencies to achieve a government that is sustainable and affordable.

All regions across the province will benefit from this new plan. We recognize, however, that northern Ontario is unique. Representation is based on population and the northern Ontario ridings will have smaller populations than the ridings in southern Ontario. We recognize that situation.

I just want to say in summation, because I don't intend to take much time today, that I'm interested in the comments of members from all parties, all sides of the House. I believe the independent member will also be speaking on this issue, is most interested in this issue. I'm anxious to hear the views all the way around.

I will point out that in doing better for less this is another aspect of our program. We eliminated the hidden tax-free allowances of the MPPs. We scrapped the gold-plated pension plans of the MPPs. The Premier has appointed the smallest cabinet in over 30 years in this House. We've cut the administrative costs of government by some \$200 million to this point. Another \$80 million has been taken out of the agencies, boards and commissions to make them run more efficiently. Of course, we are downsizing the civil service to have a more efficient and effective government. This bill furthers that particular overall program of this government.

We are living up to our commitments through this bill. We're showing leadership. Most importantly, we are establishing riding boundaries which I believe will lead to clearer, more effective, more efficient, more understandable and more workable government for the average people in the province of Ontario.

I encourage all members of the House to support this legislation and I anxiously await the rest of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Questions and comments?

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I listened very carefully to the government House leader's remarks with regard to this legislation. I want to make a couple of comments. He said that he was concerned about the people, that they are the people's ridings. Obviously all of us agree with that, but if he is so concerned about the people, why is the government so unwilling to ask the people what they think about the boundaries? Why are we not doing what has been done in every other redistribution in this province since the 1960s?

The government House leader said that there was confusion about boundaries of ridings people live in. In my area just about everybody in Algoma district knows they're in Algoma riding. Where they get confused is what federal riding they're in. They're not confused about what provincial riding they're in.

In northern Ontario just relying on the federal boundaries is basically accepting a breaking of a promise by the federal Liberals to northern Ontario where they said there would be a minimum of 11 seats in northern Ontario. You are compounding that by doing the same provincially.

The federal Liberals broke a promise to northern Ontario that there would be a minimum of 11 seats in that part of the province and are lowering it with this redistribution, and this government provincially is moving from 15 to 10. You are going to reduce the amount of representation in northern Ontario, and in so doing are

going to expand the ridings so that one riding, Kenora-Rainy River, will cover one third of the land mass of this province. Every other redistribution has taken into account rep by pop, one person, one vote, but also distances and geography. You are depending on the feds to make that decision, the federal government hasn't done it in northern Ontario, and you're just copying them.

1550

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): This is probably, colleague to colleague in this chamber, one of the most difficult pieces of legislation we will deal with. When we come to this place it's perfectly true that we all stand here and talk about "my riding." I talk about my riding of Mississauga South, and every one of us in this place naturally is parochial about their ridings.

The other thing that is very difficult about this legislation is that we know we have 130 members in this place today, we have until the next election and then we are going to have 103. We're very sensitive. I'm sensitive about the fact that in my own caucus there will be members seeking nominations in one riding whereas presently they may represent two adjacent ridings. None of this is easy in terms of our colleagues, and I am very sensitive to that fact.

What I am completely supportive of is the reduction in size of the administration of government in all aspects, so overall I am very supportive of this bill, and there isn't one member in this place who did not campaign last year for the Conservative Party on the basis of reducing the number of seats in the Legislature. The members who are speaking are concerned, and I will listen the rest of today to your comments, and because of the time I hope to be able to make a further comment on this important subject.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I know that this legislation at first glance is going to be popular. You can tell by the smirks on the faces of those who make the announcements. I'll call it a smile on my friend who is across the floor. The Toronto Star backing it, as the member for Burlington South suggested, must make the Conservatives think twice.

A couple of things have to be looked at with legislation of this kind.

First of all it is popular, but the name of the bill panders to it. I think this affects all elected representatives, and some people should be insulted by this. It panders to the feeling that all politicians, all political representatives are evil. Having been in this House as long as I have, I have seen excellent members from all parties of this House, from the Conservatives, from the Liberals, from the New Democrats, and others who have served as independents. To suggest that these are evil people whom we must get rid of is a bit of a slap in the face of many people who have served and who serve today in this assembly. I think the government has been just a little too smart with that particular title, regardless of the contents of the bill.

Second, I'm concerned that if you have fewer elected representatives, the executive branch — the advisers to the Premier, who are all very clever people and good people but they advise the Premier — are accountable to no one. Each one of us in this House is accountable to our electorate. If they don't like us they can get rid of us.

They can't easily get rid of the senior civil service or political advisers to ministers and to the Premier, good as those people might be.

Third, if I can be parochial for a moment, the Niagara Peninsula essentially loses two seats in this and some clout with the very significant issues that face the people of our area in this assembly. I simply note that as some of the concerns that I have about the legislation.

Mr Pouliot: With respect, the chief bean counter could resist no longer. We're talking about representation. With 26% of the overall land mass in the great riding I'm so honoured to represent, more than a quarter of the province, you will make it larger. Representation is what it's all about. The province has 11 million people. The north goes from 15 to 10 members, yet we have to cover more than 90% of the land mass.

We feel that what is being done here is wrong. With less representation, members will go back to their role of 35 years past, of being the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral. They'll know the eulogy by heart.

That's not what representation is about. We have to keep in mind that the role of our provincial members — we know that; it's readily acquiesced — is entirely different from that of our federal counterparts. In terms of jurisdiction, look at the two territories, but more relevant, perhaps, the sister provinces, and look at their populations. In most cases, it's just about right.

Ironically, the federal government is increasing its representation, going from 99 to 103. Ours is not a reasonable facsimile. Copying the feds doesn't apply here. We're reducing by 27 members. If you were to ask some of the population, "Do you feel that you have too many, just enough or not enough politicians?" — well, obviously you've asked that question. The people will be victimized by lack of representation, made possible courtesy of the opportunists across the floor.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Don Mills has two minutes to respond.

Hon David Johnson: I appreciate the comments from the members for Algoma, Mississauga South, St Catharines and Nipigon. I'm not standing here saying that all politicians are evil. Having been in politics for over 20 years, almost 25 years now, I certainly wouldn't say that. I would point out, having been a member of Metro Toronto council when there were 43 members, that that council was able to reduce to 34 members and provide the same level of government — some might argue better. To say that the only reason we're doing this is because politicians are evil is missing the point. We're doing this to provide clearer and more understandable government to the people of the province.

I would also say that there is an important concept which has been raised by the members opposite: one person, one vote, equal representation. In some entities, I think particularly in the province of Saskatchewan, they abide by that ruling very closely. In that case, by and large, they're looking for no deviation outside of about 5% of the norm. We have not gone to that extreme, but we've attempted by following the federal boundaries to go back to the concept of one person, one vote, equal representation — recognizing that yes, there is a differ-

ence in the north, and I think the members opposite would recognize that the number of people represented in the northern boundaries are fewer than those in southern Ontario. And Metropolitan Toronto loses eight ridings, if you will. But at least this is a fairer solution and a more understandable and accountable one.

1600

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'm very pleased to lead off on behalf of the Liberal Party in consideration of second reading of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly. I want to serve some notice at the outset that I have a fair bit to say and I will be some time in saying it.

I want to congratulate the government House leader for his presentation of the government's case. My, he's good, Mr Johnson from East York. He is so antiseptic, so tranquillizing, so eminently fair and easygoing and evenhanded that one would not associate him with any kind of revolutionary movement. Every government has one: I sat here, I listened to him and I thought, "My, he's a thin Jim Bradley, a tall, thin" —

Interjections.

Mr Conway: Or to be tripartisan about it, remember the days, for those of you who were here, of the NDP government, Tony Silipo? You'd ask Tony a question, he'd get up and he'd drone on like one of those cardinals from the Roman Curia that he so reminds me of.

Mr Pouliot: How do you spell vendetta?

Mr Conway: It's not a vendetta at all. I've spent a lot of my adult life trying to understanding how it is that one can be so mellow and evenhanded, and I always fail the test, so I want to say to the government House leader, who is almost blushing, that I marvel at the equanimity with which he makes the government's case.

I want to speak to this bill because it speaks to some of the fundamental values in our liberal representative democracy. It is a subject that over the course of many years in many places, not just the Legislative Assembly of Ontario but in the Parliament of Canada and the Congress of the United States and Westminster, has always excited very fierce debate because, as I say again, it touches on some of the fundamental issues and some of the fundamental values of our democracy.

Before I go any further, I want to thank in a special way today Mary Dickerson and her wonderful staff up at the legislative library. Over the last few days, in preparation for this afternoon's remarks, I've had to rely upon their excellent assistance more often than usual and I fear that I've been sort of terrorizing them. To Mary and to her staff, particularly to Toni Ariganello — this young person went over to U of T to get me a book yesterday on very short notice. I've got to tell you, that is service well beyond what I deserve.

I have listened carefully to the government House leader. I was not surprised to hear him make reference to the fact that we have been down this route before. The government House leader referred to the fact that once in the post-Confederation period of Ontario has there been a redistribution that actually reduced the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. That occurred in the spring of 1933. My grandfather was here. He remembered it well. I remember him telling me about how in fact he got through the whole business with virtually no change.

Lest there be someone at the Toronto Star who is of a mind to say, as they did in an editorial just the other day — the Toronto Star editorialized the other day. The editorial was "Harris Tories right to reduce ridings." This is October 7, 1996. The editorial says, "The opposition attack should be seen for what it is: self-serving bleats from politicians who stand to lose their own seats." I just want to disabuse the Toronto Star that I'm not a politician who is about to lose the seat that he now represents.

Why do I sometimes think that that bumptious and very successful Progressive Conservative Premier of Ontario, Howard Ferguson, was right when he said, "The Toronto Daily Star: never was there a paper with more circulation and less influence"? I read Christina Blizzard's book about the right turn, the great Harris campaign victory of June 1995, and I remember Ms Blizzard, in her very insightful and evenhanded way, saying in those pages that every time the Toronto Star condemned Mike Harris and the Tories, the Tory campaign central office knew that it was evermore on the right track. How we have changed, at least today, the Tory party, as represented by some of the remarks in here in terms of invoking the support of the Toronto Star.

I simply want to say that back in 1933, it is true that Premier George S. Henry introduced legislation to reduce, as an economy measure in the pit of the Depression, the size of the Legislature from 112 seats to 90. It was one part of a two-part announcement. The second part of the commitment was to reduce the executive branch of government by the corresponding 20%. That part of the commitment of Mr Henry is not part of this government announcement in Bill 81.

I'm probably going to have to go through some basic political science this afternoon, because my friend the government House leader was quick, throughout the remarks he made, to ever and always associate the Legislative Assembly with government. Students and citizens understand that the legislative branch is but one branch in our system of government. The cabinet, the executive council, is the most powerful and the most substantial decision-making body in our system today. I simply want to observe that in reducing the Legislature by 20%, the government is not committing in any way, shape or form to reduce the size of cabinet by 20%.

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): It went from 28 to 18.

Mr Conway: I was waiting for somebody to mention that. I noticed the other week in the Toronto Sun, that very neutral observer of Ontario politics, an article to the effect that the Premier's office has in fact been growing — that doesn't surprise me — and it will continue to grow. I want to say to the people watching this program, don't be misled by the bromides offered by the government House leader. According to the Toronto Sun, March 31, 1996, "Harris' Staff Just Keeps On Growing," Jamie Wallace. "Premier Mike Harris has fattened his own staff while ordering the government to slash tens of thousands of workers." And the article goes on.

My friend from Lanark intones, "But we have done these things in reducing the public service." You have. I want to look very carefully, as I have the numbers today, at the printed estimates for the Office of the Premier, the

leader of the executive branch of our government, this Premier who tells us in his press release, touting this bill — I'm reading from the Premier's press release of October 1, 1996:

"Fewer Politicians Will Do Better For Less: Harris."

"By reducing the number of MPPs, we will save \$11 million annually in salaries for politicians and staff."

I notice that a number of journalists who've done the arithmetic say that is at best new math and not entirely reliable.

Harris goes on in his announcement to talk about how he and his revolutionary commitment have said that we have too much government: it's too big, it's too cumbersome, it's too costly. I don't doubt that that is, to some extent, how many people feel, but, you see, the government is not just the Legislative Assembly. I want to take this afternoon to draw to the attention of the viewing public and the Legislature itself that early in the mandate of the Harris government, we now have press reports from, I say again, no more neutral and balanced and fair-minded a journal than the *Toronto Sun* that Premier Harris's prime ministerial staff continues to grow.

I notice the printed estimates for the Office of the Premier. What do they say? In 1994-95, the estimates for the Office of the Premier — this is now in the Rae administration — \$2.193 million. The 1995-96 estimates call for a reduction to \$1.887 million. For 1996-97, the printed estimates for the Office of the Premier, Premier Michael D. Harris, call for an expenditure of \$2.716 million. I don't doubt there will be some reconciliations, but this is what I have before me. We have the Office of the Premier growing, according to these printed estimates. I've been in government and I know how you can move some of these spending items in the executive branch from the Office of the Premier to the Cabinet Office, to the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, to Management Board, to a number of other places.

1610

I simply say again at the outset that we have a bill before us today that leads people to believe that by reducing the number of members of the Legislature we are reducing evenly the apparatus of government. I submit to you that I would be much more supportive of this initiative if I could be shown that the Premier's office and the Cabinet Office and related operations were going to be reduced by a corresponding percentage. I do not believe the evidence exists to support that contention. I hear nothing and see nothing from Michael Harris and Ernie Eves and others that leads me to believe that is going to happen.

I should say to my friends opposite, just to complete the story about 1933, that George Henry introduced the bill; the bill passed. Because the government House leader made a point of saying some people are going to be affected more than others, it is important to note that of that then assembly in the 1933 redistribution — and it was a Conservative majority government — 19 Conservatives, two Progressives and one Liberal technically lost their seats.

It is interesting if you look at that. I say to my friend from St Thomas, I don't want to be too historical on this, but there are a couple of lessons on this, not the least of

which is this: There's no doubt that Premier Henry did it for not just economy reasons but for what he thought was good politics. Thirteen months after the bill passed, his government was obliterated at the polls. They faced the worst rout that a provincial Conservative Party in government had faced in the history of the province.

It was interesting what they did down in Elgin in that 1933 redistribution. They put East and West Elgin together, but they took a couple of townships out of Elgin and tucked them into Kent, I think it was. Why? According to Premier Henry, writing his old friend former Premier Ferguson, they thought they would hive the Grits and fix Mitch Hepburn, the Liberal leader who was expected to run in the Elgin seat in 1934. Just a little reminder that even so saintly a person as George S. Henry didn't ever lose sight of the fact that redistributions provide an opportunity for some political calculation. But in 1933 the economy measure was offered not just for the Legislature but for the cabinet as well, and the politics of it didn't work out because a year later the government was soundly defeated.

We have before us a bill to reduce the size of the assembly. The government House leader is quite right when he says that the members of the Progressive Conservative Party who signed on to the Harris campaign in 1995 did so with this as one of the commitments. Who among us can forget that sunny day in the spring of 1995 when Mike Harris arranged that flatbed out in front of Queen's Park with the 27 chairs that were going to be taken away? I don't doubt that it had some effect, although I don't sense that it made a major impact, but it has to be said by me that it was certainly part of the Tory manifesto.

I also want to say this afternoon that we have had since Confederation, following the decennial census, an adjustment of electoral boundaries. Over the years, with the exception of 1933, those boundaries have been adjusted in a way that has almost always added more seats to this assembly. In every case where this issue came before this assembly, and when it came before the Parliament of Canada, it was dealt with in a way that was anticipated when John A. Macdonald dealt with the representation question at Confederation.

Macdonald observed in this matter that electoral representation, not just for the province of Ontario but for the new Dominion, would have to take into account two fundamental realities. One was population and one was geography. On every occasion since Confederation, it was not just a matter, as the *Globe and Mail* piece of yesterday would have you believe — though, to be fair to the *Globe and Mail*, they are as consistent today in their view that there should be a pure rep by pop as was their progenitor George Brown 135 years ago. But Macdonald was, I believe, right when he said that there had to ever and always be in these matters a consideration of population and geography.

It is interesting, if you look back to how we began in 1867, we began as a province of 1.5 million people with 82 seats, and the 82 seats we got in 1867 were then, as they will be after the passage of this bill, precisely the number of seats in the Dominion Parliament. The number 82 was decided because the fundamental determinant in

the whole piece was the representation for the province of Quebec. The Dominion Parliament was going to have 65 members for Quebec because that was the assignment after the Rebellion and the Union Parliament; 65 members for Canada East. It would be 65 members in the lower house of the new Dominion Parliament. If you took the rep-by-pop formula, Ontario would then get, because of its greater population than Quebec, 82 Dominion members for the province and 82 members for the provincial or local Legislature, as Queen's Park was to be called. In 1867, Ontario had what Macdonald imagined to be nothing more than a municipal government: 1.5 million people represented by 82 members, a total provincial budget of \$1.3 million and a total civil service provincially of fewer than 200 people. That's what the Ontario government was in 1867.

When you move through the various redistributions, in every case save and except in 1933, legislatures, governments of the province of Ontario almost always, responding to the geographic imperative of Canada and of Ontario, added seats to the provincial Legislature. As we went through the process — and I'm not going to bore members today. One of the reasons I'm interested in this subject is that it gives rise to some of the most fascinating activities that one can imagine a group of politicians engaged in.

Macdonald's gerrymander of 1882 left the Ontario Liberals mad for over a generation. The Christian statesman Oliver Mowat here in Ontario was just a lot more careful doing a lower-intensity version of the same thing. J.R. Mallory's book *The Structure of Canadian Government* is worth reading on the subject, about how various prime ministers, various party leaders, various — as they called them, God forbid, in the 19th century — wire pullers tried to figure out a way to hive one side or another. It was very interesting. Until really the 1950s and 1960s, after which we got independent commissions usually headed by some judge, this whole redistribution matter was left to the politicians, and the politicians worked their magic, oftentimes being disappointed in the result, and certainly the 1933 example in Ontario is a good example.

What's been the Ontario experience? The Ontario experience is probably best summarized in the fifth report of the Camp commission, tabled in this Legislature the month I arrived here, in September 1975. Just so you know who was involved in this, there were three commissioners appointed by the Davis government: Dalton Kingsley Camp; Douglas Fisher, former CCF member of Parliament for Port Arthur, the giant-killer of the 1957 federal campaign, defeating C.D. Howe, a man who had spent eight years in the Parliament of Canada — didn't run again in 1965, if I'm not mistaken, because he found the pressures of trying to be an effective member of Parliament and represent a big northwestern Ontario federal constituency quite frankly more than he wanted to continue to manage with the pay he was receiving and the family that he was responsible for; and the third commissioner was Farquhar Oliver, for 42 years the UFO/Progressive/Liberal MLA for South Grey in this province. I don't need to tell you what Dalton Camp's political experience was. Camp, Fisher and Farquhar

Oliver were the three people who authored this report, and I recommend it to you on this subject.

1620

I'm going to refer en passant, as we say in Pembroke, to that section of the report which deals with the question of representation. These commissioners point out in that chapter of their report — let me just read it: "Before Confederation...its leading architect, Sir John A. Macdonald, said representation in Ontario would be based on numbers and territory — ie, population and square miles."

They are the ones who reminded me that in 1867 we had an Ontario legislature of 82 members, we had one and a half million people, we had an average constituency size of 18,000, we had an Ontario government with annual expenditures of \$1.3 million, we had a cabinet of five people, including the Premier, we had public servants of fewer than 200. They go on to tell us that in 1974 the government of Ontario had grown from \$1.3 million to a total expenditure in excess of \$10 billion then — it's \$50 billion now — a public service, direct and indirect, of 140,000, and a provincial population of eight million. They talk about the whole question of redistributions over the years. They talk very appropriately about one of the fundamental questions, which is not just equal representation but effective representation at the local level to compensate "for immense urban concentration and to provide some elasticity for regions with wide population scatter."

The fifth report of the Camp commission goes on to say:

"Our scan through the past record of debate" on redistribution concerning the size of membership in the Ontario assembly "underlines that there has always been a dominant concern over local and regional representation. That is, the population growth in the province as a whole, and the demographic transfers to the cities, required any redistribution to retain a semblance of the principle of representation by population. But this was always" — always, always — "tempered by a broad determination to retain representation for those areas which the application of strict mathematics would have deprived."

Listen to this, September 1975, Messrs Camp, Oliver and Fisher: "We can foresee the outcry about more drones" — because one of their recommendations was to increase the size of the assembly by something like 50 new members. It was not accepted, but they recommended a substantial increase in the number of members of the Legislature. With that recommendation in mind they say, "We can foresee the outcry about more drones to draw on the honey-pot of the taxpayers' moneys, and reiterations that we have already got too many politicians and too much politics — what we really need is more efficiency and less politics." That's Dalton Camp, Doug Fisher and Farquhar Oliver talking 21 years ago.

They go on to say, and I hope my friends in the NDP are listening to this: "We have regretted the apotheosis for the constituency function and the gigantic growth in the constituency 'caseload' of an MPP at the expense of his role as a legislator and partisan at Queen's Park. The general point we are making" from all of this, they go on

to say, is that there has been an explosion in the growth of the Ontario government, "in revenue raising, spending, employees, and in agencies with delegated powers. This growth is huge and should have significance for the responsibilities of the Legislature."

I just want to stop for a moment and use this time to recall to all honourable members what are the functions of Parliament. We're not talking about the assembly. Another great book — if you haven't read it I highly recommend it — C.E.S. Franks, the *Parliament of Canada*, published by the University of Toronto Press, 1987. A very good, up-to-date account of the state of parliamentary government in Canada.

Ned Franks from Queen's University says, I think quite aptly, "Parliament has four basic functions: to make a government, to make a government work, to make a government behave and to create an alternate government." Franks goes on to say there are couple of other important functions that Parliament in our society has to meet. One of those functions is public education around complex and important issues, and he says, "Also, it ought to be a training ground for political leaders."

Those are the functions of Parliament. They're not the functions of cabinet; they're not the functions of the civil service. Let me repeat them. The functions of Parliament — that's us, as members of this assembly — "to make a government, to make a government work, to make a government behave and to create an alternate government."

What does it mean in our system to say, "To make a government"? People forget that under the system of British responsible government the public elects a Parliament and we, the Parliament, choose the government. Many people would say it is axiomatic that if you elect a Parliament it's a given, in the day and age of party government, the day and age of strong political parties, that you're going to automatically know what the government is. That's generally true, but in the spring of 1985 we had a reminder that it is not always the case, as it was not the case in 1919, when the farmers and the independents and the labour gang just ended up with more seats than the Tories or the Liberals and Mr Drury formed a government.

We have, under the British system from which we derive, as an assembly, as a self-respecting Parliament with very real powers, the first requirement: to create a government. Then we've got to make that government work because we vote supply. We, as a Parliament, are the people who give the Miller government, the Davis government, the Peterson government, the Harris government the lifeblood without which it cannot function.

We also have a duty to make it behave. As a minister, when I was over there and people like Mike Harris and Ernie Eves were over here as the loyal opposition, it was their solemn duty to make the government behave by pointing out our several deficiencies. In the exercise of that responsibility Harris and Eves were engaged in another very important function: creating not just for the Legislature but for the province beyond not just the impression but hopefully the reality that there was an alternate government, should they succeed in the other duty of pointing out the several deficiencies of the then government.

Those are important responsibilities, and that's why who comes here, how we get here, all of which arise in discussion around a redistribution bill, are so fundamentally important, often taken for granted.

Again just looking at one of the other aspects of the Camp commission report that I found interesting, and I want to refer to it today because I was doing some of the calculation — I think this is probably going to surprise some people, but let me just continue with the Camp report.

1630

Camp, in this report, makes very plain what people like Professor Franks and Professor J.R. Mallory and anyone else who has studied the Canadian parliamentary system know, that the most outstanding characteristic of the Canadian Parliament and all of the provincial Legislatures is how dominated they are by cabinet; a very strong pattern from almost the beginning of executive dominance, very strong cabinets, enormously strong Prime Ministers, Premiers, much more so than, interestingly, the British culture from which this system emanates.

With that in mind, just let me go back. Camp talks in this fifth report about the cabinet having made its adjustment to the requirements of modern government, about the very substantial growth in cabinet, in its numbers, in its power, in its staff, in its reach. Again quoting from Camp: "The original cabinet of 1867 had five members, that of 1975 has had 27 ministers. Premier Robarts cut back to 19 ministers from Premier Frost's high" in the 1950s, early 1960s, "of 22. But, I say to the government House leader, the Robarts cutback in cabinet size, according to these data, "did not last long." This was the point I wanted to make. Camp observes that in 1975 in the 29th Legislative Assembly of Ontario, that's 1971-75, "over half of the government caucus was either in the ministry or bearing a direct responsibility to it."

I asked my staff to find out today — and I don't mean this as a partisan comment, because quite frankly I'm sure it's equally true of the Peterson and Rae governments. But today, under the leadership of Mike Harris, we have 20 people in the cabinet, we have 20 parliamentary assistants, we have eight Conservative members serving as whips, other positions, seven as committee chairs. That means that in a caucus of 82, fully 67 of those positions are either of or directly tied to the ministry. That is not a criticism of the Harris government, because I could probably produce the same numbers about Peterson and Rae.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]): They were bigger numbers. They were higher, I know they were.

Mr Conway: My point is simply that we have in the government caucus today maybe 15 members who are unattached.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): One of them's the Speaker now.

Mr Conway: I think the election last week of the Speaker is an indication of certain ferment around the place that I might want to talk about a little bit later. But the point I want to make is that three quarters, 80% of the government caucus is either in the ministry or of the ministry. Again, if you think about what the functions are

that we are supposed to discharge as members of the assembly, what the assembly's responsibility is — because I ask the viewing audience and I ask the assembly not to fall into the easy trap laid for it and us by Harris and Johnson. They want you to believe that the assembly is the government. No, no. The assembly is Parliament. The cabinet is the government, the executive council; that is the executive authority.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Are you in favour of this bill? I haven't figured that one out yet.

Mr Conway: No, I want to be clear that I think there are aspects of the map that are clearly out of whack. The fact that in 1995 it took eight or nine times the number of people to elect a member for Markham as it did for Rainy River is clearly not acceptable.

I will say that the new boundaries as proposed for the area that I now represent are very sensible and are ones that because they represent a good community of interest, because they bring the county of Renfrew together in one seat, are sensible and ones I would support.

But I want to be clear that I will oppose this bill because it offends, it violates one of the most fundamental values that a good representation act must take into account nationally and in Ontario, and that is regionalism. That is the value of regionalism, and I say this very seriously.

I want to say this as seriously as I can without becoming unduly provocative. There are aspects of Canada and Ontario that are so obvious that a lot of bright people working in cabinet offices and in political party headquarters just don't seem to understand. I once had a teacher who said: "Take a look at the map of Canada and if you remember nothing else, you remember this: This is a huge country, an empty country and a country that's damned cold for six months of the year. This is not the United Kingdom, this is not Scandinavia and this is not southern California." The politician, Liberal, Tory, Reform, New Democrat, who forgets the fundamental value and issue of regionalism, not just in the Dominion of Canada but in the dominion of Ontario, misjudges and does not serve the broad public interest.

I'm not here, by the way, saying that we couldn't reduce seats. No, I'd be willing. I understand the economy argument. I am not here saying that you've just got to keep adding. I agreed with Mr Davis or would have agreed with Mr Davis in 1975 when he got that recommendation. They had, I think, 117 seats, and Camp was recommending another 50, going up to something like 180. Davis rightly said, "Come on, that's far too much. We'll go to 125," and we went to 130 in 1986. I think Mr Davis made a good decision. They make an interesting argument, but I don't think it was a compelling argument and I wouldn't want to meet the people of Pembroke, Beachburg or Barry's Bay and have to explain and defend that.

Let me say again, lest anybody thinks this is just the whining of somebody whose ox is being gored, what this map proposes for the county of Renfrew I think is a good idea and it's one I would support, but I'm not going to support this overall policy for a number of reasons.

But the fundamental reason I object is that it violates something fundamental in the Ontario and Canadian

political culture. It's one of the reasons — and God, I shouldn't say this with some of my urban friends around here — why I become so angry with something, dare I say it, like the federal gun bill. It's not because I don't understand what the justice minister for Canada is trying to do and if it were just me, God, you could do a lot of things because I don't hunt. But I'll tell you, when I see every New Democrat in Saskatchewan arrayed against that bill, I know one thing. I know that Allan Rock and his friends in the federal government and the justice department have concocted a piece of legislation that, like this bill, offends that value of regionalism.

It is enormously powerful in this province and country and we've all made the mistake of not recognizing it for the tiger that it is, but I don't want anybody — and God forbid, they might already be out there printing the pamphlets saying, "Conway's against the bill because he's going to lose his seat and he thinks there should be 200 members." Not at all.

Now I want to come to perhaps a more detailed analysis of the case. I know when I talk to people in my county they're going to say, and it's such a good argument, that Bradley was right a moment ago when he said: "Oh, boy, this is so good. This is very cute. They're going to like this," the talk show crowd and the headline writers at the Toronto Star and at the Globe and Mail.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): The Toronto Star doesn't like anything.

Mr Conway: Well, they do. I don't know whether the member for Durham West has yet read today's Ottawa Citizen, but she might want to read the editorial pages of the Ottawa Citizen. Don't let your head swell, but there's a glowing article about the putative first female Premier of Ontario I read today.

Now the argument that's being advanced so cleverly —

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): She doesn't want to read the rest of it. Trust me.

Mr Conway: Judge Guzzo says don't read the largest English-language daily.

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Mrs Boyd: He probably doesn't agree with the editorial writer either.

Mr Conway: But I want to cut to the quick. I want to come to the basic argument that the government is going to be advancing, that this is an economy measure. Baloney. It is going to save less than advertised and in the overall scheme of things it will be not a significant saving. When one remembers what the solemn obligations and duties of Parliament are, I tell you, you are going to have to think twice about justifying those savings.

I can be as tightfisted as anybody in here. I'll tell you, one thing I have not been doing for 20 years is billing my constituency association for golf memberships and for a lot of other things. I want to say that the overwhelming majority of people I have known in the Progressive Conservative Party in 21 years haven't been doing it either.

The economy measure is a red herring. Let's talk about the basic argument that it's going to be just like the federal map. I want to talk about how the federal map that is the basis for this was developed. I want members

to listen carefully to this because, again, my concern is how this offends principally the regional imperative.

In 1985 the Parliament of Canada passed a Representation Act. What they did in the federal act of 1985 was amend downwards the provisions of the federal Representation Act of 1974 that looked, on the census date of 1981, as though they were going to create a federal House of 369 MPs after the census of 2001. Clearly the government at the time, I think wisely, decided that was too many and it had to put the brakes on it. So they amended some of the fundamentals of the 1974 Representation Act, which essentially gives us the federal map we have today.

I want you to listen to how they did that. How do we get 103 federal seats? Here is the formula that led to that. Their formula was that you start with the 282 seats the House of Commons had in 1985 and the first thing you do is assign two seats to the Northwest Territories and one to Yukon Territory. Did you hear that? The first thing you do in the formula is give three seats to two territories that have a total population of less than 96,000. The population of Yukon Territory is 30,000, approximately. The population of the Northwest Territories is 66,000. The first thing you do is you assign to those large land masses with relatively few people three seats, two to the Northwest Territories and one to Yukon.

Mr Murdoch: So what are you saying? That rep by population goes out right at the start?

Mr Conway: No, it is amended. It has always been amended. The government's argument is, "The feds have done it," so I want to look at the feds' formula. That's the first part of it. Oh, it gets better.

Then you take the total population of the 10 provinces and you divide it into the remaining 279 seats to get what they call the electoral quotient. But then they make a couple of other adjustments. Listen to this: Adjustments are made to those provincial numbers as required by the application of the senatorial clause — namely, that no province can have fewer MPs than senators — and the grandfather clause — namely, that no province will have fewer seats than it had in the Parliament which lasted between 1984 and 1988. What's the senatorial clause? Very simple; territory again. Prince Edward, with a population of 130,000, is guaranteed four seats; Newfoundland and Labrador has a guarantee of seven under that formula. That's how Ontario got 103.

What I find interesting about all of this is, oh, the argument is so facile; it sucks you in. It's designed for the talk show crowd. It's designed for the tabloid crowd. They'll like it. But if you think about this, if you just accept the logic that this is based on the federal formula, what have we got here with the application of the senatorial clause and the not below the 1984-88 Parliament? You've got a recognition that in the Dominion of Canada Macdonald's advice holds — that there must be rep by pop and an appreciation and an adjustment for territory.

In Bill 81 the Harris government did not do what the federal people did, Tories and Liberals and New Democrats — and Reformers, I presume — in the federal model on which ours is now going to be based. There is nowhere in Bill 81 a recognition that in the territorial

region of the dominion of Ontario there are similar geographic pressures and territorial imperatives that need to be recognized. It is because this bill and this policy so wantonly, so premeditatedly ignore that advice and that requirement that I cannot support it.

It's interesting when I look at the numbers. What have we got if I look at the new federal numbers? We've got 103 in Ontario. We've got 26 in Alberta. Do you know what I find fascinating? Not even the most right-wing Tory I know in Alberta is arguing that the new Alberta Legislature should have 26 seats. Have you heard anybody in Prince Edward Island saying that the new Prince Edward Island Legislature should have four seats? Back to my favourite example, Alberta: Has Ralph Klein, has even the most fire-breathing right-winger in Pincher Creek or Taber said, "What we really need in the democratic interest is an Alberta Legislature with 26 seats"?

Mr Guzzo: There's a guy in High River.

Mr Conway: Maybe. They've just passed, interestingly, a new redistribution bill in the province of Alberta. What have they got? For a population of approximately 2.7 million, they've got 83 members.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): That's a disgrace.

Mr Conway: The member for Cambridge says it's a disgrace. You might want to go to the government caucus in Alberta and tell them that.

My friends, this policy sounds oh so very inviting, but when one thinks about it and when one looks at the factors that gave us 103 seats in Ontario, I ask, why did you not accept all of the principles that informed that federal redistribution?

I want to say, in perhaps too direct and partisan a way to Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, but let me say it in their absence: You have, in a way that I would never have though possible, betrayed the people of your region, in a way that is just scandalous. That somebody from Toronto or Ottawa might concoct this policy and bring it to this House I might more easily understand, but that Ernie Eves from Parry Sound and Mike Harris from Nipissing, both proud representatives of mid-northern Ontario, should advance this policy in this assembly, with its consequences for their region, is one of the most scandalous acts we have before us.

This gives me an opportunity to recall the words of Ernie Eves, MPP, Parry Sound, from that day, October 15, 1985, when we were debating the last redistribution bill, a bill that brought the number of members from 125 to 130. Here is what Mr Eves said on that day:

"The commission" — meaning the redistribution commission — "has clearly recognized, as a result of the resolution, that we should also consider such factors" — other than rep by pop — "as community and diversity of interests, means of communication, varying conditions of representation between urban and rural ridings, special geographic considerations and traditional riding boundaries. In outlining its plans for the riding of Parry Sound, both in the first and second draft proposals, I" — Ernie Eves — "would submit the commission has somewhat neglected these equally valid considerations, choosing instead to focus almost entirely on the issue of population." Continuing on that day, Mr Eves said to this assembly, "In many other respects, the new proposal falls

short of the guidelines offered in the resolution establishing" this redistribution commission. "As was the case in the commission's first proposal, for example, the idea of Parry Sound-Nipissing-Renfrew riding failed to take into account the enormous problems associated with providing effective representation to such a large geographical area. In fact, a round trip from the town of Parry Sound to the town of Deep River is an eight-hour undertaking. It goes without saying that this travel time alone would render effective representation by one MPP difficult, if not virtually impossible.

"There are many other issues I could raise in discussing — " He goes on, Ernie Eves, MPP for Parry Sound. It gets better. Mike Harris goes on in that debate to talk about his concern about what the proposal's draft and final are going to do to the community of interest in west Nipissing.

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Noble Villeneuve — you'll like this. Villeneuve, the then member for Glengarry, says on October 17 on this matter of redistribution, "As many of the previous speakers addressing this" redistribution question "have mentioned, we do not want to see the rural part of Ontario further underrepresented. I," Noble Villeneuve, "personally feel, because of the location of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the structure and makeup of rural areas, we must retain the status quo intact. It is a situation that was addressed by a number of my colleagues and I certainly agree with them." I, Noble Villeneuve, say that "Rural Ontario must have more, not less, representation."

Bob Runciman goes on to make an equally compelling argument about some of the problems he faces in Leeds-Grenville, and Ms Marland also goes on to talk about the difference between equal and effective representation. I won't bore you with more of that. But like John A. Macdonald in the 1860s, Villeneuve and Eves and Marland and Runciman were right; they were right. That's not to say there can't be change. There must be change, and there might even be a reduction. But my friends, what we have is something quite to the contrary.

What do we have? What we have I think is something quite other than redrawing the boundaries. What we have in Bill 81 is something that has much more to do with the right-wing agenda of the Premier's advisors. I say to my friends on the government bench, I've got great admiration for you. You are the ones who said to your families and to your businesses and to your other associations: "I am prepared to sacrifice all that I'm told is to be sacrificed for parliamentary representation. I will put my name on the ballot and I will go and do my duty."

I don't mean this as just a criticism of today, because as a member of a former government, it was substantially true of mine as well. It is these wire pullers, these unelected people in the back rooms, who read the New York Times and the Washington Post and the National Review, who are more attuned to the suburbs of New Jersey and rural Iowa than — they probably have never been to Batchawana Bay and don't know where the hell Moose Creek is and don't much care. They haven't been to rural Grey. Proton? That must be something from a chemistry lab. They don't know and they don't much

care. They've read David Frum, they listen to Firing Line, they know Bill Buckley's latest utterance. Their neck and their name, they're not on the line, yours are. Yes, some of us, you're going to lose your job; of course. Anybody who runs for public office in Canada today knows that. The average length of stay in this assembly is four and a half years. The average length of stay in the Parliament of Canada is not much more. You would have to be a blithering idiot to volunteer for this job thinking that you have any real chance of a long-term life. I know everybody imagines, "Oh Lord, shall it be I?"

Hon Mr Jackson: That's a little too demonstrative.

Mr Conway: Well, maybe it is too demonstrative. God forbid that given my several evident failings I've survived, remarkably, seven general elections.

But back to my main point: It is your name, it is your commitment, it is your family that is on the line. These wire pullers, these backroom types, whether they serve Harris or Rae or Peterson, oh, they're not going to run. No, you bloody can count on it, they're not going to run, but have they got an easy cure for what the public thinks is the trouble with government: too damn many politicians.

I'll say this about honourable members, elected officials: At least you know who we are and you can bloody well do something about us if you don't like us. To the great credit of Canadian electorates, they have not shown a great unwillingness to kick our posteriors. I mean, David Peterson — King Peterson one day, out on his rear end the next day. The elegant Bob Rae — hero today, bum tomorrow. Mike Harris — well, we will see.

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): Have you read Rae's book yet?

Mr Conway: This is serious, I say to my friends, because this is about the role of Parliament and the integrity of members of Parliament. Much of this we have to blame on ourselves. I don't disagree with some of the Premier's assessment of the public mood. Of course, they think, "Too much government, too damn many of these politicians and they've all got gold-plated pensions and they've all gone to Hawaii recently at public expense." Any one of us who's been out there understands that is much of the public mood. But just because people believe it viscerally is no reason to believe that it is ever and always true.

Ms Lankin: Or pander to it.

Mr Conway: Or, as the member from Beaches says, that any one of us ought to pander to it. Yes, it will give you a short-term gain, but as George Henry found out, the economy measure of 1933 didn't count for a tinker's dam 12 months later.

I simply say to my friends in the assembly that yes, there are problems; I don't deny that. We are a very overgoverned country and province. I would be quite happy and anxious to work with people to reduce that burden, and to be fair to the current government, it has done some things that should be supported, painful though they may be, to reduce some of that burden.

But I come back to my central point: If it can be shown to me that cabinet is going to be reduced correspondingly to the Legislature, then I might find this a lot more easily accepted.

I want to take a moment. I'm just going to read because I think this is a good time to. What did Professor Franks find when he looked at the Canadian, the British and the American political parliamentary world? I'm going to cite a couple of things. This is quite recent and therefore relatively recent — 1987 — so it's not too out of date:

"The reality of this" — the Canadian — "power structure can be best illustrated by using a measure of experience in office of prime ministers and members of Parliament," and he looks now at Canada and Britain. "It can be seen that there is a marked difference between Canada and Britain. Canada is characterized by long-term prime ministers and short-term members of Parliament, while Britain has the opposite: long-term members of Parliament," who are very independent in the main, "and short-term prime ministers. Four Canadian prime ministers have governed Canada for 60% of our" post-Confederation "history.... No British Prime Minister has ever held office" — this is before Margaret Thatcher's tenure ended — "even as long as the fourth most durable of our prime ministers, Sir Wilfrid Laurier...."

"The contrast between parliamentary experience of" British and Canadian "MPs is equally remarkable. More than half of Canadian MPs have had fewer than five years in Parliament; only 23% of British" are there so short a period of time. "More than half of British MPs have more than 10 years' experience; only 23% of Canadian" MPs have such a length of stay.

"The average Canadian member of Parliament is a newcomer who is likely to leave before he or she has served 10 years, and is most unlikely to serve for 15 years. The average British member has been in the House for at least 10 years, and is very likely to serve for at least 15...."

"This comparison of parliamentary experience of MPs and of time in office of Prime Ministers shows there is a very different relationship of power" between the two parliaments in Canada and Britain. Here's the central point: "In Canada a strong, solidly entrenched Prime Minister faces an insecure and transient House of Commons; in Britain an insecure and transient Prime Minister faces a strong and solidly entrenched House. Power is more centralized within the political executive, particularly the Prime Minister," much more so in Canada than in Britain.

1700

That's one of the central problems, apparently, with the system we're trying to fix. There's nothing in this policy that talks about what the Harris government wants to do with that reality. I have an idea.

You know, if the executive dominance is so much a problem, as people like Professor Franks and Professor Mallory have pointed out, then maybe we ought to be looking at our electoral system.

Let me give you an example that I think Tories might like. If you're really concerned about the power of government in Canada and in Ontario, according to all of the political science you've got to first and foremost look at cabinet and the offices of the Premier and Prime Minister. Then you might ask yourself the question, "How do they get there under our system of first past the post?"

You know what you get? You get a situation like 1990. You get a situation where with a voter turnout of about 60%, a party, in this case the New Democratic Party, with less than 38% of the vote forms a majority government. Then you get, under this system of strong, centralized control in cabinet and in a Premier's office, an imperial premiership and strong cabinet based on 38% of the popular vote with a 60% turnout. For the whiz kids in the Premier's office and for the right-wing crowd at Saturday Night and at the Globe and Mail, maybe they should start proposing means to deal with that. You won't hear anything about that. I haven't heard neither jot nor tittle about dealing with an electoral system that gives us these majority governments that are so strongly centralized in the Premier's office. Have you?

If we're trying to fix the problem of too much government and government that is sometimes thought to be unrepresentative, maybe it's time to look at some change to the electoral system. But you know why you won't hear that? Because the people who under our system have to propose that would of course be goring their own ox, and that would require a self-denying ordinance of a superhuman kind. But I say to my friend the wonderfully antiseptic government House leader that maybe he might want to bring back a companion piece to match Bill 81. Maybe he might want to think up some changes that put some real constraints on what professors like Mallory and Franks say is the real problem. Remember what Franks said. The problem's not in Parliament. You've got a bunch of short-term amateurs who come and go, who have very little security, and they're expected, as I recall the functions of Parliament, to make governments behave.

I've been here 21 years and it's only in the last few years, and partly because of my experience in government, that I now feel I've got the backbone and the guts to stand up and say some things that I would never have said 15 years ago. Part of that is my growing experience here, not just in the assembly but in government. It's quite clear from what Franks says that one of the really interesting things about the British system that gives what most of us want — how many times have you heard your constituents say, "God, we'd like you to speak out, be a little more independent"? We've got a system in Canada that really penalizes people who are independent, and that's what I was getting at earlier about our election for Speaker last week.

We've got a new Speaker who is certainly one of the brightest, one of the quickest and, I think by all accounts, one of the most independent members not just of this assembly but of any of the seven of which I've been a member. He's Speaker today because, I would submit, his evident independence was incompatible with the political and parliamentary culture we've got in Canada that militates against his advancement because he's independent. If Chris Stockwell were at Westminster, I'm going to tell you, he'd be a lot happier and he would have been a lot more accepted.

Interesting it is that people like Professor Franks say that one of the reasons you get the kind of independence in Britain, and it's particularly so with the British Conservative Party — I ask you to think about something that's happened in Britain at least twice in this century. A

government caucus dumped its own leader as Prime Minister. Think about it. Can you imagine a bunch of Canadian parliamentarians doing that? You think back to Dick Hatfield in New Brunswick and his apparent excesses. You know there was a whimper now and then, but he took them right down the drain to a complete wipeout in the election of 1987. Vander Zalm did virtually the same, although he left. He was forced out of office before the election whenever it was, in the late 1980s. And Maggie Thatcher was no shrinking violet. Her own caucus brought her down. How is it they could bring her down? Because there are a lot of independent-minded people in British Conservative parliamentary caucuses.

I remember being at Westminster one week when Harold Macmillan, a former Conservative Prime Minister, was in the House of Lords delivering a denunciation of his parliamentary leader and Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, the famous speech of Macmillan, "Where is it written in the canons of British Conservatism that one must sell the family silverware?" Could you imagine somebody doing that here? Not on your life. It's a criticism applied to all of us.

We're asked in Bill 81 to believe that it is the members who are the problem. Well, there are some problems, absolutely. There has been some discreditable conduct over the years, over the decades. Bill Kilbourn once said eloquently, "You know, politics is at one and the same time the noblest of the arts and the most soiled of professions." Yes, there is soiled linen. I'm sorry that there is, but there is. We're all people and we have an obligation, as individuals and as members of this institution, to do our best to deal with it.

My Liberal friends in Ottawa have the Jag problem. The Jag problem was no big surprise. The big surprise I guess was that they thought: "Oh God, we can count on one thing. The electors of Markham-Whitchurch-Stouffville will never elect a Liberal MP, so that will be the solution to the Jag problem." But I've got to believe they knew. The electors of Markham-Whitchurch-Stouffville voted Jag in. Electors, you know, do have some responsibilities in this society. You have to ask yourself the question, as an elector: "Who is Murdoch? What is he all about? What about his character? I don't need to know everything about him, but what's he about? Is he some kind of bankrupt? Or Conway, is he some kind of bankrupt or worse?" There have been many cases where the knowledge of that did not deter people from electing somebody.

There's a marvellous case a friend of mine at Queen's has written about, the famous Schuyler Shibley, who got elected federally in Frontenac in the 1870s — an unbelievable character, the things he did that were known about in the Prime Minister's own backyard. He unseated a Conservative to get the nomination. He not only won, he won two or three times, and a terrible character in the innocent days of the 1870s. It's safer for me to talk about those days than perhaps some recent examples.

There are problems, I don't doubt that, but let me say to the government that Macdonald spoke well when he said, 100 and some years ago, that any redistribution nationally must take into account issues of not just population but geography. Macdonald said something

else — oh, and I like this. Macdonald said, "Given a government with a big surplus and a big majority and a weak opposition, and you could debauch a committee of archangels." I think he knew something of what he spoke. 1710

Hon Mr Jackson: You really like that.

Mr Conway: I do like that, because I say to my friend from Burlington that now he's a minister, his interests are not the interests of this assembly. We are members of Parliament. He's a member of the executive council, an important job but a different job.

It wasn't until 1931 federally and I think 1940 provincially that, if Cam Jackson was summoned to cabinet after an election, the first thing he had to do was resign his seat and go back to the electors of Burlington South and get a new and different sanction to serve in cabinet. That was done away with, but that's a reality, and it's a reality that recognizes the different functions of Parliament and cabinet. We have this very interesting system, that most people don't understand, that's called responsible government.

I just want to move on to a couple of other things. What's this really all about? It's all about, I think, other agendas. I think it's really about this right-wing attitude that is anti-government, anti-politician, anti-public service, because some of these right-wing ideologues, many of them, have figured out people are mad, and they're absolutely right. There is a frustration and there is an anger that we can all feel. I don't disagree that there is a problem. I disagree profoundly that this kind of response is what is in the public interest.

I was thinking the other day of my friends Harris and Eves, who are not here today. One of the great speeches ever given about representation was given a long time ago by Edmund Burke. The one part of the story that most people don't know — it's great political science — the part about this that I want to just mention — you talk about guts. You know, the older I get in this job, boy, the people I admire now are the people like J.S. Woodsworth and René Lévesque. They took a principled stand and they walked out when all of the popularity was the other way.

Could you imagine Woodsworth standing up in Parliament in the early days of the war and saying no? I can't imagine having that kind of courage. I think of Lévesque walking out on his future in 19-when-ever-it-was over a fundamental — that's guts, that's real guts. That has nothing to do with pandering to the talk show crowd. You want guts, you want political testosterone, it's that kind of stuff. It's David Lewis standing up in Parliament in 1970 and saying to Pierre Trudeau, "You are wrong about this policy, this War Measures Act." That's guts, that's real guts.

Edmund Burke made a great speech. Most people know about the speech, but the thing that people forget about that speech, given to the electors of Bristol in November 1774, was that Burke was relatively young — 45 years of age — on his way up, and he had just won a seat that was a real prize. He had just won something that was really in his political self-interest. Almost immediately upon his election he stood up before those electors and he said some things they did not want to hear. They were

absolutely upset about it. He put his neck on the line and, you know, he didn't remain for long the member for Bristol.

I'm just going to take a moment, because as we talk about guts and the people — you know, David Lewis, J.S. Woodsworth, René Lévesque — they didn't do the easy thing when they stood up and bit into the strong wind of public opinion. Anybody can be a fair-weather friend.

Let me just read a little bit of Burke's famous speech. His electors are already mad; he has come out in favour of freer trade with Ireland and Catholic emancipation, which I can tell you in the late 18th century in Bristol were not popular things for his constituents. They were mad and they were wreaking some vengeance upon him. Here's what he said in justifying his position:

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a parliamentary representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his duties to theirs; and above all, ever and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience he ought" to sacrifice to no one, not "to any man, not to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure;" no, these are a trust from God, "for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative" in Parliament "owes you not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

He goes on to say:

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against agents and advocates from other areas; but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole, where not local purposes, not local prejudice ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed, but when you have chosen him he is not the member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament. If the local constituent should have an interest or should form a hasty opinion evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member" of Parliament "for that place ought to be as far as any other from any endeavour to give it effect."

I don't happen to agree with all — and that was a much more elitist world. But my point is, he made that speech just days after he had won a big prize, and he put it all on the line. That's guts; that's real guts.

I just simply say to my friends here, and more importantly to the authors of this policy, the Fewer Politicians Act — I can hear them giggling, I can hear these little people, the ones I see, these little blue-shirted types, I see them running around the place grunting at public servants. Oh, they're a precious bunch, some of these young Tories. I tell you, I say to my friend, most of the people I know are pretty civilized, but some of these people, boy, they just have a contempt for public service and

many of the people who work around here. I see them up in the — I can just see them.

I'm sorry, John, but I've seen it, and not always, but I've seen more of it recently than I've seen in 20 years, and I've seen a lot of good Conservative administrations around here. I might disagree with Bill Davis and I might disagree with Frank Miller, but I'm going to tell you, the people around Bill Davis I haven't seen behaving with some of this "spit in your face" attitude. But it's part of the piece. You're in government, you're in politics, it's dirt, it's just —

Interjection.

Mr Conway: Well, I'm telling you. And it's all of a piece, and it's your piece, it's your honour, it's your name, it's your integrity.

The Fewer Politicians Act. You know, we've been there before. I was chuckling reading something else the other day. In 1875, in response to the federal government giving more federal aid to the province of Manitoba, the government of Canada extracted from that fledgling provincial government out there on the banks of the Assiniboine, the Red River: "Get rid of your upper house. Make government cheaper and more efficient." So they did. They got a bigger handout from Ottawa and the government of Manitoba responded and they introduced a bill — I like the title of it — a bill introduced and passed in the Manitoba Legislature 1875, "An Act to diminish the expenses of the Legislative Assembly for the province of Manitoba." Have we been there before? Of course we have. And there's more, I'm sure. I didn't look very hard.

But Bradley is right. It reminds me — dare I say it — of this government and this party in government. Remember those old days of the Red Chinese, as we used to call them, Chairman Mao, suggesting to his followers that some self-criticism, some self-abuse, some self-flagellation was a good thing?

Interjections.

Mr Conway: Well, my friends, what are you doing here?

Mr Wildman: They're a bunch of Maoists.

Mr Conway: It's the same exercise. Beat up on yourselves, debase your currency, and then wonder why it wasn't enough, wonder why you can't get any respect.

I say again, yes, there is soiled linen and there ought to be changes in representation, but is this kind of policy the solution to the problem that I think we all fail? It's not just about parliamentary representation, it's about the integrity of Parliament; it's about the role of politics and politicians in our society.

1720

There's a companion piece out there these days. It's Your Ontario, Your Choice. Remember I said a moment ago, "What's the real agenda here?" It's all about this neo-conservative attitude around: "We've got to get around these special interests. These politicians, you know, they're just a bunch of special interests. They're more worried about gold-plated pensions and foreign travel. We've got to get fewer of them, notwithstanding the fact that they're elected."

Oh, I elect Chris Hodgson. This guy John Piper that I read about in the paper today, or this guy Gordon

Ashworth or that character brought over from Mulroney's office to work — is it Scott Money? He was being referred to here. No voter ever saw them. No voter will ever see them. No voter will ever get a chance to exact an accountability from them. Not on your word. So what have we got? But they're going to get at Chris Hodgson, oh, you betcha, and Harry Danford and Bud Wildman and Sean Conway. If they don't like what we're about, boy, then they can have at us.

Mr Wildman: And they should.

Mr Conway: Wildman is right, they should. That's a fundamental part of the accountability process. But we've got this referendum legislation. Mike Harris wants to give you more of a direct say. He's going to get rid of the politicians. Let's have some referenda. Harris says this initiative is going to save \$11 million. You won't be able to run one referendum in the province for less than \$11 million.

What are we going to have them on? We're going to have them on casino gambling. We're going to have them on taxation. We're going to have them on constitutional reform. I can tell you what we're not going to have them on. I'll tell you the people of Sudbury are not going to be able to have one on hospital restructuring. I can assure you they're not going to be given a referendum on the size and power of executive government in modern Ontario. No, no.

But I want to take a last moment in response to that, since I think that's a big part of the real agenda, to read a little from John Ralston Saul's *The Doubter's Companion*. He talks a little about this new fad that the neo-conservative right seems to like. Under the category of "Direct Democracy," Ralston Saul writes the following:

"An appealing idea which has been unworkable for more than 2,000 years. This makes it a favourite with political groups whose basic instincts are anti-democratic.

"Twenty-five hundred years ago in" Athens "every citizen could speak and vote on every question." Athenian democracy 2,500 years ago did work, and it worked because in the main "there were only 40,000 voters, 5,000 to 6,000 of whom took part regularly.

"The Athenian model could still work — in smaller towns, for example, or in specific areas such as school boards — if people were willing to commit the equivalent time and energy. This kind of participation would mean making politics as important in their lives as family and careers and far more important than private pleasures.

"Those who promote direct democracy talk a lot about small towns, but are not really interested in them. What they are fascinated by is the mythological theme of the small town. They like the big picture, where the undercurrent of discontent includes millions of people. They like big themes — race, language, freedom, security, debt, efficiency, individualism. These emotion-laden abstractions are almost impervious to sensible public discussion. They can be activated through the exploitation of pain. History, after all, inflicts emotional wounds on us all. The proponents of direct democracy scratch away at these in order to increase the sense that a personal wrong has been done. If these wounds can be made to bleed profusely enough, the sensible, practical nature of the population will be destabilized.

"Over the last half-century the direct democracy argument has come from an increasingly strange right wing which somehow manages to combine a romanticized version of local nationalism with practical support for neo-conservative economic policies....

"The new Right claims the citizen is being excluded from public affairs. They are right. However, instead of coming to terms with the real causes of this exclusion, they exploit it through false populism. They condemn the slow mechanisms of public debate in large complex societies. The process of serious deliberation can't help but be awkward and filled with doubt, lost time and errors. Yet this inefficiency can transform itself into an expression of the public interest.

"The false populists will seize upon any moment of failure as if it were a breakdown of representative democracy. They seek to hijack it through more direct mechanisms which, because they eliminate consideration and indirection, are fundamentally judgemental and authoritarian. What they seek are more easily controllable structures.

"The referendum," John Ralston Saul goes on to say, "has always been one of their favourite tools. The complexities of the real world, long-term practical evolutions and working relationships are transformed abruptly into the abstract clarity involving a yes or a no. Technology has since added dozens of new techniques." Dare I say the talk show crowd. "New technology makes direct votes on endless subjects possible. We are at the beginning of a sustained push by authoritarian movements of the systems. As with referenda, they make real debate almost impossible but facilitate large, emotional swings of the sort that demagogues are best at creating.

"The old-fashioned demagogues have been given a new lease on life by their marriage to technology. What they share with this communications technology is a devotion to the linear. Questions are asked, then answered. Problems are posed, then solved. And when they are not answered or solved, the conclusion is that the system has failed.

"Direct democracy seems to push the citizen forward by emphasizing the importance of casting a ballot. Of course the vote is essential to the democratic process, but it is not the purpose. Consideration, reflection, doubt and debate were the primary purpose" of that Athenian democracy 2,500 years ago. "These four processes" — consideration, reflection, doubt and debate — "are the body of the democratic sentence."

I think John Ralston Saul says it better than I could say it. The real agenda here is not about saving money, though some money will be saved. The real agenda is not about curtailing the power of government, because if that were the real agenda we would have corresponding legislation dealing with the electoral system that produces these majority governments with very minority electoral mandates made possible by the first-past-the-post system.

No, the real agenda here is about this right-wing instinct to continue to debase much of the currency that we have inherited from our British forebears. I say again, there are problems, and I agree with Premier Harris when he talks about the mood out there. That is clearly a problem and any honourable member — Liberal, Tory,

New Democrat or Independent — would have to privately, if not publicly, agree. But is this the solution? I believe it is not the solution, nor is it offered for the good and best reasons — in the public interest, as Edmund Burke talked about the public interest.

I am not unduly affected. The recommendation for Renfrew is a good recommendation. Could we have fewer seats than 130? I would be quite prepared to do so. But I will vote against this bill, understanding the short-term unpopularity of that position, because this bill and this policy are offered with the wrong motivation, for the wrong reasons. It offends some of the fundamental values that have long been a characteristic of good electoral representation and redistribution, and it is particularly offensive to rural and northern Ontario.

1730

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I just want to very briefly comment on the speech made by the member for Renfrew North. I've heard this member speak on a number of occasions, and I would have to say that today he was probably at his most eloquent because he spoke very directly about an issue that should concern all of us as parliamentarians. You see, I believe, as he does, that the problem that is being fixed here, if you want to use that approach, in this piece of legislation is the wrong problem.

The problem that we have in this Parliament is not the number of politicians. We could readily agree to a reduced number of politicians. The problem that we have in this Parliament is really the growing concentration there has been in the executive branch of government, particularly in the Premier's office, and I say this not just with respect to this government. It's something that was there within our government, something that was there with the Liberals when they were government.

The fear I have is that the courage that the member for Renfrew North spoke about, that he has discovered and that I quite frankly am only beginning to discover, having sat in government and sitting now in the opposition benches — I fear that it will take many members across the way who now are in government the time that they will need to return to the opposition benches before they realize too that what we should be doing through this process and through the time that we have is looking significantly at changing the electoral system we have in this province and not debasing that little power which each of us has, whether we're backbench government members or backbench opposition members, by giving in to the simple notion that just reducing the number of MPPs is going to fix the problem. It's not going to fix anything.

Mr Murdoch: I certainly appreciate having a bit of time to talk about this long talk that we just had. I appreciate a lot of what you had to say. I think a lot of the criticism could fit all three parties. I know you meant it that way and I'll take it that way.

One of the things about this bill that I have problems with is that, again, it was drawn up in Ottawa. I don't know who — you called them wire pluggers or wire pullers or something; I'd call them worse than that, I think, if I could in here, but I might not last. They had no

idea of the different areas — you talked about that — or different regions.

I can only look to my own. I'm not saying again about my own riding; my seat is there and I don't have to move or things like that, but you take the county of Grey. It now will have three MPPs and three MPs in it. It's not needed. I think it will cost us more money. When the county of Grey wants to talk to someone, they're going to have to bring in three people rather than one now.

So I think there are some problems with this bill and I have problems with that. I disagree a bit with you on saying it isn't to save money, because I believe it is to save money. I can see where you're saying the public is angry with politicians and it's easy to cut ourselves up and things like that and try to get away with it. I believe actually and honestly that when the Common Sense Revolution was designed, it was there to save money. I think we will save money on it. But then I have great problems with the way it's being set up. I would hope that we will be able to take this out to a committee or at least that people will be able to come here and talk about it. If you look at the list of people who talked about it, and you mentioned some, the last time it was changed, there are a number of people who want to have their say on this.

So I do appreciate a lot of the things you said, but this bill, I don't know. I have problems supporting it the way it is because of the ridings and the way they've been drawn up. It doesn't take the consideration of our northern people and a lot of our areas down here.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): Just following up on the comments made by the member for Grey-Owen Sound, he truly has indicated that this is not a bill that was drawn up by people here in Ontario, in essence following the federal ridings.

It's always a pleasure to follow on the eloquent and well-researched comments of the member for Renfrew North. I think the point he makes in terms of this piece of legislation offending and violating one of the fundamental values of representation, that being regionalism, is something that we're all going to have to take a look at as we get further into this bill.

The member for Grey-Owen Sound also indicated that yes, we should be out there listening to find out what the people have to say about this particular piece of legislation. When the government House leader introduced it earlier on today, I questioned him, I asked him if he knew the distance from Rainy River to Fort Severn. That's the distance that's going to be from one corner to the other corner of one third of the area of this province: over 370,000 square kilometres. I asked him if he knew that distance. I don't think he does, and I don't think he realizes that there are 50 first nation communities in that particular area. When we talk about the province of Ontario we have to take a look at those differences.

We have to look as well at what the economics behind this bill will actually be. In terms of the economic measures, as the member so well put it, it's baloney when you start talking about the saving of dollars and you start talking about regionalization and what this is going to do.

Take a look at the federal example and how they had adjusted their representation for areas such as the North-

west Territories and the Yukon. I think we as a province will have to do that as well. Again, I look forward to further debate on this bill.

Mr Wildman: I want to take this opportunity to compliment my friend from Renfrew North on his presentation. I wasn't able to be present in the House for the whole of it, but I was in my office and I listened and watched on television.

It was obviously a well-researched and well-thought-out presentation, and I do congratulate the member for putting forward a very important issue; that is, whether or not we, all of us as members of this assembly, who value the role of public service and the importance that politicians play in representative democracy, want to pander to that view that is too widely held, that somehow politicians are some sort of special interest group, not to be trusted, not to be valued in our system, a system of democracy. Their titling this bill the Fewer Politicians Act is so petty and small.

What is also important in this presentation is the need for the public to be able to have a say, for there to be hearings so people can understand what this means and what it will mean for northern and rural Ontario, what it means in terms of the communities of interest, the geographic size of ridings that will result from this. The argument is made that if the federal members can do it, so can the provincial members.

That assumes something. It assumes that the federal boundaries commission made good decisions. I submit to you, for those of us who represent northern and rural Ontario, that is a heroic assumption.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Renfrew North has two minutes to respond.

Mr Conway: I want to thank my colleagues on all sides for their too kind words. Adlai Stevenson once said, "Flattery is fine, so long one does not inhale," so, like Bill Clinton, I'll try not to inhale.

I want to make one point that obviously I didn't make clearly enough. I really would like your attention, because some people seem to have misunderstood this. What the federal people did in their plan for the Dominion of Canada was that they applied certain principles, taking into account the particular geographic concerns of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Prince Edward Island. They did that first, before they got to the big populous regions like Ontario.

My concern and complaint about the Ontario plan is that going into the dominion of Ontario there was no similar allowance. We have our own Yukon. It's Kenora-Rainy River. We have our own Prince Edward Island, ably represented by people like Harry Danford, Noble Villeneuve and others, Pat Hoy. The federal plan — you may not like what you get in Ontario, but the Ontario part of it is to be considered of a piece. And remember what I said. They started their calculation giving two seats to the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory got one, three seats for 90,000 people. And then they moved, with the senatorial clause, four seats to PEI — you couldn't change it — though there's only 133,000 people.

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Our plan does none of that. If you wanted to accept the federal proposal, I think you had to apply to the domin-

ion of Ontario the same adjustment for the values of northern and rural Ontario that, like it or not, were at least applied in the federal plan that forms the basis of their country-wide redistribution.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I stand this afternoon in full compliance with the arguments made by the member for Renfrew North and congratulate him on a compelling argument about why we should defeat this piece of legislation in this House when it comes to a vote.

When I arrived here in 1990, I never in my wildest dreams, in a million years, imagined that I would be standing here in this House defending the integrity of the Legislature of Ontario. As a matter of fact, I find it passing strange as a New Democrat that I would be standing in this House making argument for the people before me, most of them Conservatives in this province, who made decisions about how many people would serve and how democracy would evolve in this province; to be standing here defending the traditions of this place when it is my understanding that to be Conservative is to be in defence of traditions and stability and to be concerned about change, particularly radical change. Certainly this piece of legislation, as presented and as it unfolds, will be a radical departure from the way we've done things in this province and in the way we've tried to improve on and make democracy better and more meaningful for the people of Ontario.

I will try, in the time I have, to make argument that will be very similar to the argument made by the member for Renfrew North, that will point out that this piece of legislation, this initiative by the government, is an attack on democracy. It's an attack on democracy and it's an attack on politicians, most particularly politicians in Ontario. It is also, in doing that, a veiled attempt — however, I believe it will be exposed in the comments that I will make, that the member for Renfrew North made and that others will make in this House, particularly on this side — to move as quickly as possible with the neo-conservative, right-wing agenda of this government, to put it in place and, with this piece of legislation, to enshrine it in stone.

I will speak more, probably tomorrow because I don't have much time today, about the integrity of politicians and members who serve in this Legislature, both past and present, and why this attack is so offensive, why the approach of this government and this initiative is so offensive and should be so offensive to all of us who today carry the mantle that so many before us, with great honour and in a distinguished fashion, carried in the past.

In its most obvious manifestation, what this government wants to do with this place is close it down, diminish it and turn the decision-making process over to a series of referendums.

I'd like to share with the House the opinion of my own community, Sault Ste Marie, on that particular issue. I think they make the point as succinctly and clearly as I would or could in this House.

Mayor Steve Butland, speaking on behalf of the councillors of Sault Ste Marie, says that in coming to Toronto to speak to the committee that was looking at the

introduction of referendums, he was to crash the party in Toronto to try to deliver a message about referendums. The gist of the message is, "Northern Ontario's sparse population means its voice will be lost when the people speak in province-wide referendums," and that's the fear that all of us have on this side of the House as we see the diminishing of the activity of this place, the diminishing of the participation by members duly elected in this place and the democratic process and the introduction of simpler and more direct forms of democracy which in the end will end up ignoring the voice of different regions of this province, different minority groups in this province, voices that we've always felt very clearly as politicians were an enriching series of advice to those of us who make law and govern on behalf of all of the people in the province.

We've heard over the last year and some months this government speak of this House as nothing more than a board of directors which comes here on occasion, as boards of directors do, to rubber-stamp the decisions made by the executive council of government or of the corporation. I did a little research in preparing for today and found just a few thoughts that I thought might be interesting to people out there who are trying to get their heads around why it is that we on this side of the House might have such grave concern about this piece of legislation.

If we're going to turn this place into a board of directors, this is what a board of directors is about. A board of directors is responsible to only one person — the corporation — and concerned always about the best interests of the corporation, not about the stakeholder or the shareholder, not about the consumer or their customers out there or the people who deliver product to the corporation to make and sell whatever it is they happen to be in the business of doing. Sure, they do consider the shareholder or the consumer from time to time, but they're not the primary focus of the board of directors; they're secondary.

If a director on a board of directors concerns himself about the stakeholder or the shareholder and the consumer, it's usually a matter of strategy to find a way around that concern and to do as little as possible. If a director wrongfully interferes and does something to make a corporation break its contract, as for example in the case of this government, which has broken so many of the promises it made to the people of this province over the last year and some few months, they can be sued. In this place, if we break a promise, if we do a bad job, if after a period of three or four years it is seen that we're not operating in the best interests of the people of the province and the wellbeing of the province and its future, we go to the polls and the people speak and many of us are replaced and governments are changed.

Members of the Legislature are expected to be prudent, but more important than that are expected to be visionary, to be people who can dream of a better place, of a better time, of a way of doing things better so that all of the people of the jurisdiction over which they govern can have a better life, whereas a person with vision is not necessarily what a corporation is looking for in a director.

You know, this sounds kind of familiar, because wasn't it the Premier of this province who not so long ago said, in appointing his cabinet and speaking about the fact that perhaps some members of that cabinet weren't as qualified perhaps as others, that too much knowledge can be a bad thing?

This is a Legislature built on democratic principles. This is a Legislature that has at its core the best democratic principles that have been developed and thought of and have evolved over the years. I would just for your information and to put it on the record like to read to you from *An Encyclopaedia of Parliament* by Wilding, a definition of a Legislature. "A legislature is that body of persons in a country or state invested with power to make, alter and repeal laws. It may consist of one or two chambers with similar or differing powers. In the monarchies of the British Commonwealth the Legislature is incomplete without the sovereign, whose assent is constitutionally required before any measure can become law."

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A legislature, in the context of a democracy — and I'll read for you from Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Collegiate Dictionary* a definition of democracy, in case some of the members across the way don't understand what a democracy is or is about: "Democracy is a form of government in which political power resides in all the people and is exercised by them directly or is given to elected representatives, with each citizen sharing equally in political privilege and duty and with his right to do so protected by free elections and other guarantees."

That's a far cry from a board of directors, a far cry from the reduction in responsibility and power and the possibility to make real change in a jurisdiction that a board of directors would be able to achieve if Mike Harris has his way.

Just to go a little further to describe to you and share with you what others thought democracy or electoral responsibility is, this is John Diefenbaker, one of your own, although perhaps in this day and age you're wanting to distance yourself from people like Mr Diefenbaker. Mr Diefenbaker says, on April 9, 1962, "We believe that the will of the people should not be thwarted or diminished by crude efforts in some cases or the redrawing of maps of peculiar shape and form in order to remove those whose presence in this chamber would be regarded by a government with a large majority as inimical to the quietude of the soul of that government."

In another book that I picked up over the last few days in preparing for this discussion today, because I think it's a very important discussion we're having here, very fundamental to the future of this province and where we're going as a people collectively together, it says: "An electoral system is complex. Canada's is the result of many decades of experimentation and testing and is still being improved. An electoral system must permit the widest possible participation by citizens in the democratic process while at the same time preventing abuses by those who would take unfair advantage of it."

I suggest, with Bill 81 that's being introduced today, that in fact is what is happening. The Conservative

government of the day in Ontario is going to diminish the ability of this House to challenge the agenda that it is wanting to impose on the people of this jurisdiction. This government is intent on very quickly and viciously, without any thought or plans that they're willing to share with anybody, introducing a right-wing approach to the affairs of Ontario that's going to damage all of us, every one of us, and most particularly those who are most vulnerable among us. And they're going to do it in a most insidious way: by diminishing the democracy that we've all come to appreciate and to see as an institution that defended against the kind of radical change and action this government is wanting to introduce.

I suggest that they will not get away with it. There are people on this side of the House who will speak clearly and elegantly about why we shouldn't be doing this, and there are people out there who will listen and understand, because they care about Ontario. They've participated in some small or large way in the past in their own jurisdiction and will understand what it means to have somebody at the table representing their view. They'll know that when you have one less person there, your voice is less heard and the chance of your fingerprints being put on the laws and regulations that are made in that particular place are diminished, and so your rights are diminished and the community in which you live becomes less viable for you and for your friends and neighbours and for your family.

I suggest that this initiative of the government will be fought most strongly in that part of Ontario I come from and speak proudly of so often here in this Legislature, because we feel in northern Ontario that we have a lot to offer and that our circumstance and situation up there is different and unique. We need a strong voice down here to make sure that's understood. When our voice is heard and we can participate fully in the decision-making that is done that affects us directly, we think the province of Ontario is enhanced and made better.

Even though down here over the last week or two many of the articles and editorials in the newspapers have been supportive of this initiative by this government, that is not the case in the north. I share with you — and it will probably be the last little piece that I will share with you today, but I will be back tomorrow to speak some more about this — an editorial from the daily Sault Star printed September 30 of this year:

"Northern Ontario residents have every right to be concerned about legislation introduced last week by the Ontario government that will cut the province's electoral ridings to 103 from 130. The boundaries of the new ridings will be the same boundaries that applied to federal ridings in Ontario.

"While it is commendable that Premier Mike Harris should want to downsize and thereby reduce the cost of government, there is much to criticize in this new makeup of provincial ridings from a northern perspective.

"The obvious concern is that it has been difficult enough for the north to be heard in Queen's Park when northern Ontario has only 16 of the 130 seats in the Legislature, but it will be an even worse situation with only 11 seats out of 103. Further, while the Sault is fortunate that its MPP, Tony Martin, will have much the same riding even after configuration, Algoma MPP Bud Wildman will see his riding double in size.

"It is unfair for an MPP to have to be responsible for a constituency that stretches the distances of the new Algoma riding. How can that MPP familiarize himself with the people and problems of a vast riding like that?

"It is particularly irritating that Mike Harris, who is from North Bay, did not appreciate the special circumstances of the north and work out a formula that would preserve a certain number of northern Ontario seats, the better to ensure this region's MPPs are not so overwhelmed by the voice of southern Ontario members of the Legislature.

"At first glance, it might seem fair for the Ontario government to base its ridings on the federal pattern. But only at first glance.

"For one thing, being a federal member of Parliament involves different responsibilities than those entailed by a member of a provincial Legislature. The responsibilities and matters of concern for an MP are more general and more national in nature, so the MP isn't as involved in the day-to-day lives of his constituents. So having larger, less intimate ridings isn't as bad an idea. But that's not the case with the provincial ridings, with the MPPs far more involved in their constituents' lives.

"For another, the province of Ontario should more correctly base its electoral boundaries on systems used by other provinces, not the one used by Ottawa. Using this arrangement, it would find that provinces whose population is about equal to that of northern Ontario have many more representatives, even though the geographical area might be much smaller.

"With more insight, imagination and courage, the Mike Harris government could have come up with riding reductions that would have been far kinder and fairer to northern Ontario," and I suggest to you, to the whole of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Your time will continue tomorrow.

It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Thursday 10 October 1996

Jeudi 10 octobre 1996



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 October 1996

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 octobre 1996

*The House met at 1103.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY NETWORK

Mr Hudak moved private member's notice of motion number 26:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should strongly urge the government of Canada to invest at least two cents of the 10-cents-per-litre federal excise fuel tax to support the creation of a strong and viable national highway network through Ontario, and that the government of Ontario should devote similar resources to said highway network through Ontario.

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): This resolution comes about from some experiences over the past year and a half in government, through my work in the Niagara Peninsula, my riding of Niagara South. It also follows more recently on a meeting that Minister Palladini and I had with the federal committee on transportation, trade and tourism. The meeting took place in Hamilton. The minister and I were trying to get the federal government to contribute what we would call its fair share to a national highway system through Ontario.

I believe my constituents will strongly support me in this: that the federal government should recognize Ontario's key role in any federal trade and transportation strategy. In other words, Ontario is a linchpin of the highway network we have through Canada. A considerable amount of trade and tourism already comes through Ontario, especially through the Niagara Peninsula and Windsor, and any formulation of a federal policy in trade and tourism should definitely recognize Ontario's key role.

At the same time, we wanted to stress in that meeting on Monday with the federal committee that there are also some extraordinary economic opportunities presented by a national highway system through Ontario, in terms of tourism development, trade development and, of course, job creation from that point; key also, which has motivated me to present this resolution, to the Niagara Peninsula and economic development in the Niagara Peninsula.

Canada is the only major industrialized nation without some kind of national highway program. Having spent some time travelling across Canada and the States, you can see a very consistent and strong national highway system of interstates through the USA. The federal government's share of the national highway system in Canada is only a 6% contribution rate, which in my opinion, and I hope in the opinion of this House, is a dismal rating when compared to Australia, for example,

similar in mass and similar in government, where they have a 50% contribution from the feds; Germany, 36%; and as I said, the United States, with a very strong interstate network, around 30%.

In the federal context and how it breaks down in Ontario, if you look at how our NAFTA partners are doing, the US is very strong. It has a very strong interstate network. They've devoted US\$121 billion to the interstate routes throughout the United States and to their border crossings, the major cities and the capitals.

Mexico, which doesn't have the economic strength of Canada or the strong democracy we have in Canada, and certainly not anywhere near the size of the economy we have in Canada, even Mexico — some members of the House may not be aware of this and they should be — has committed 7,000 kilometres of new highways to their own national highway system to help them benefit from trade through NAFTA and tourism. That works out to a \$10-billion investment. They expect to have huge economic opportunities here.

I fear that without a similar national strategy in Canada, with Ontario as its linchpin, Canada may become the poor partner in NAFTA. I feel it's clear that the federal government should establish a national highway program, because it's critical to the future growth of trade and tourism throughout Canada, throughout Ontario and, most importantly for me, throughout the Niagara Peninsula. It helps us get the goods to market on time; efficient and dependable delivery of goods. Especially with some 90% of the goods for export using transport trucks, you cut down travel time significantly.

Most importantly, over 50 cents of any tourist dollar is spent on transportation. Again, considering what I see as a large influx of tourism into the Niagara Peninsula due to Casino Niagara coming into the Niagara Peninsula, the improvements at the Fort Erie Race Track and some improvements we're working on in Port Colborne in my riding, we need a very strong national highway system, especially through southern Ontario, to take advantage of these opportunities.

Let me give you some numbers; for example, 64% of the \$150 billion in land trade between Canada and the States goes through the Niagara Peninsula or Windsor. My riding has the QEW and Highway 3 through it. In fact, 30,000 vehicles a day in this most recent August came across the Peace Bridge and went up the QEW or up Highway 3 along Lake Erie.

1110

The Peace Bridge is scheduled to twin beginning in 1999. It's a \$200-million private sector investment. It's the second busiest border crossing in Canada, as a matter of fact, and it's going to get even busier with twin spans. What that sets up is a six-lane crossing into the States

and a six-lane bridge at Burlington. I would like to see some money devoted into the peninsula for a six-lane QEW all the way from the foot of the Peace Bridge through Burlington towards Toronto.

In the States, they're moving towards the expansion of Highway 219, which will start out in Buffalo, move down into the major northeastern corridor, which consists of Boston, Washington, Baltimore, New York City and then further down to Atlanta, Georgia, a massive trade and tourism market that we could connect from Toronto, down the QEW, through Niagara, across the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie to Buffalo, to this massive market.

You could also envision a mid-peninsula corridor — the CAA is talking about this, and some major industries — that's going to take the traffic up through Highway 403, also through Windsor and into the States to Michigan and possibly down to Mexico for trade routes.

You can envision a very strong national highway system which would be the NAFTA highway of prosperity. We have a very strong interest locally in it and a very strong interest provincially, and I guess I would just like to see the feds contribute a fair share. I'm not asking for a pot of gold. That's what I said to the committee: It's not a pot of gold.

They have a 10-cents-per-litre fuel tax, as the members well know. It's in the resolution. I'm asking for a minimum, and I think it's a rather modest request, of two cents out of the 10 cents that they take from Ontario motorists through the fuel tax, to put that back into the Ontario highway system. Some \$2 billion a year that Ontario motorists shell out at the pump goes to the federal coffers, but barely a dime, metaphorically, goes back into Ontario highways. It goes to the east coast, some interprovincial transfers and maybe some to Quebec, but not nearly enough, not close to enough back into Ontario's highways.

I understand and support the federal government's movement towards a balanced budget. They're making some progress on that and I encourage them to proceed and to complete balancing the budget. But at the same time, I'd like to see a redirection of existing funds. It's \$2 billion that comes out of the Ontario motorists' pockets; let's put it back into the highways. Let's put it back for the benefit of the motorists, and then trade and tourism and some job growth once more. That's what I feel about recognizing Ontario's fair share. How much does Ontario put into the federal coffers through the gas tax? Let's get some of that back.

Due to time constraints, I'll leave some of the spending items to Jerry Ouellette, the hardworking parliamentary assistant for transportation. I know Jerry's going to talk about what his work with Minister Palladini has been in repairing the highways in Ontario.

From my perspective in Niagara, it was rather a rough spring because due to the thaws in the wintertime, the QEW was in rough shape. There were a lot of calls to my office, and for every call to my office, a similar call went to Minister Palladini from the Tim Hudak action centre in Stevensville directly to the Minister of Transportation. Al said he was working on it, "You're going to get the money." He had to finish that highway he was working on.

Then Bart Maves from Niagara Falls, a very hard-working member for the Falls, also has the QEW through his riding; similar calls. Tom Froese, also here today, I'm sure was working to get some highway money put in our area, and Frank Sheehan. I'm fully confident —

Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford): And Ron Johnson of Brantford.

Mr Hudak: You know the QEW then. I'm fully confident that Peter Kormos and Jim Bradley also were very positive in working with the Minister of Transportation to get the money in that area, and we were successful.

Minister Palladini freed up \$160 million from the budget. It's tough to do with Finance Minister Ernie Eves, but Minister Palladini, with our support in Niagara, got that \$160 million extra. He pumped \$50 million into Niagara, and in fact 30% of that money into the riding of Niagara South, and we're certainly grateful for that.

So the Queen E is coming along well now. We've got a traffic light in Port Colborne at 140 and 3. But my feeling certainly is that we have to go farther with that. I think it's high time the federal government started contributing its share of the federal gas tax back into Ontario, back into Niagara, with the long-term goal of job creation, tourism, transportation strategy. That's certainly why I'm putting forward this resolution, and I hope that my fellow members today in the House will offer their strong support in this measure, which we will then take to the federal government and pressure them for their fair share back to Ontario's highway network.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): It's interesting to hear the member for Niagara South, who basically is saying it's now the federal government's responsibility to take care of the disastrous highways in this province.

If you look at the resolution here, they're asking for federal taxes that are collected for gasoline to be dedicated towards Ontario roads. The member does not indicate he supports a fixed portion of the gasoline taxes collected by the province to go towards road maintenance. So here it is: Whether he likes it or not, the provincial highways are primarily a provincial responsibility. If you're asking the federal government to take a portion of the gas tax for highway reconstruction, why is your member not asking for a fixed portion of the Ontario taxes collected to go towards road reconstruction? Here we have a double standard, when it's a purely provincial responsibility.

I supported and put forth a resolution earlier this year that said there should be a highway investment fund that would go towards repair and reconstruction of roads. The members on the government side voted against it, yet now they're asking for the federal government to do what they should be doing. The roads in this province are your responsibility. Don't try and get it off your agenda. You should be supporting a fixed amount of the \$1 billion that you collect. The Ministry of Transportation, your Ministry of Finance, collects \$1 billion a year in gasoline tax, in licensing. What does it do with that \$1 billion? A portion of that \$1 billion should be dedicated in a highway trust fund for repairing and maintaining your highways.

As the Auditor General told you, 60% of the highways in this province are substandard, and if you drive across this province you'll see that they're in pathetic shape.

What did your minister do? As soon as you were elected, you cut about \$400 million from the transportation budget. The Auditor General told you 60% of the roads were in substandard condition. What did you do? You cut \$400 million from the roads — no wonder you have potholes all over this province; no wonder there was no road maintenance — when you had that warning from the Auditor General.

In terms of what you're doing, you're telling the federal government to take care of your roads, when what you've done is you've offloaded about 2,000 kilometres of roads on to the local municipalities, which have had a 40% cut in their transfer payments. If you're so serious about roads, why would you be dumping all these roads on local municipalities, which don't have the money to do it?

It sure is easy to point your finger at the federal government and say, "Oh, you should be paying for our road reconstruction," when what you're doing is cutting your budget, what you're doing is basically offloading your responsibility on to local municipalities and local property taxpayers.

Then what are you doing to the whole long-term vision of transportation? No matter how many roads you build, you have to have an integrated, balanced transportation system. What this government has been doing over the last year and a half is systematically gutting part of the transportation system. Not only what they've done to the roads budgets; look what they've done to public transportation. They've cut GO Transit by about 25%, they've cut municipal transit in the hundreds of thousands of dollars in cities and towns across Ontario. No wonder the QEW is a parking lot, no wonder the 401 is a gridlock continually, it's because of what you've done. By cutting back subsidies on public transportation you've pushed more people into the cars. There are more cars on the highways, more congestion, more gridlock.

1120

Part of the reason our roads are in such bad shape is you're pushing more and more cars and trucks on to the roads as you abandon public transportation. You can't just treat this problem of our highways and our transportation problems by a literal tunnel vision approach; it's got to be an integrated, comprehensive approach which gets people to use public transportation plus road transportation. You can't shirk this responsibility on to the feds. Before you know it, you'll be saying GO Transit should be subsidized by the federal government.

As you know, your minister announced last Thursday he is going to sell off GO Transit because he thinks the local municipalities should be picking up 25% of the cost. He thinks the private sector should be picking up the rest. So how is selling off GO Transit going to make it easier for commuters, business people and truckers to use our highways? It's going to push more of our commuters on to our highways because when you privatize GO Transit for sure there's going to be a cutback in service. You saw the proof of that in the disappearance of the Casino Rama express, the one the minister stood up here and praised the same day he was pulling the plug on it.

That is why you just can't blame the federal government for what is clearly a provincial responsibility. Before you know it, you'll also be asking the federal government to invest in local hospitals and schools. It's your responsibility primarily. You are in government, you took over the roads, don't whine about the federal government.

I have no problem with the federal government investing in a national transportation strategy, but what this resolution does is basically just whines and blames the feds. You have a responsibility, I tell the member for Niagara South. If you think it's so important, why don't you support the establishment of a fixed amount of money out of existing dollars collected by your government towards highway reconstruction and rehabilitation?

Your government refuses to do that. What's good enough for the feds is not good enough for you when the highways are your responsibility. If you want the feds to cooperate, you should be clear and say you support a fixed amount of money that goes into highway reconstruction maintenance. This is something that is done in all states except New Jersey. There's nothing wrong with doing that. That is the only way you're ever going to deal with the problem of our roads.

This is not something you can fix overnight or you can fix by blaming the federal government; you need a 10-year reinvestment plan. You just can't do it by blaming Ottawa. You have to have a highway trust fund where you get the money that is already collected, as I said, through the gasoline tax, through the transportation taxes and licensing. You have \$1 billion you collect every year. Put some of that \$1 billion in a fixed amount towards our highways.

Also invest in transportation. If you look at the congestion that exists in southern Ontario specifically, that congestion costs us \$1 billion a year because companies delivering goods and services are delayed in traffic tie-ups. They have to buy more fuel because of traffic tie-ups. Sales people lose all kinds of time and money because of congestion. I ask any of you to say that we don't have a massive congestion and gridlock problem in the GTA in southern Ontario. We do. You're not going to solve that problem by just whining at Ottawa.

You have to put in a comprehensive investment strategy in road reconstruction from existing moneys you collect. I have nothing to say that is negative to saying Ottawa should maybe kick in too, but don't just say Ottawa should be doing it. You should have the same commitment that you asked Ottawa to have. You don't have it.

You've been cutting transportation budgets since you got into office and our roads show it. You know what they do on the 401? They've got so many potholes, all they do is mill the road, so it becomes like a roller-coaster effect on the highways. They think they're hiding the potholes. Wait till this winter when there are going to be more potholes, more snow-covered, ice-covered roads, because you still don't understand that you can't do more for less when you cut back on essential services like transportation. That's what you're seeing in the Niagara region. You're seeing it in Cornwall, you're seeing it in Kenora and Sudbury. They see the byproduct of your tax cut. You're taking money out of transportation to pay for

that tax cut. You're taking money out of hospitals to pay for the tax cut.

You may be able to hide some of the soft services and those cuts; you can't hide the fact you've cut the roads budget because Ontarians drive those roads every day and no matter how much the whiz kids try to spin it and how much you blame the feds, people are blaming you for the state of our roads. Our roads and the congestion is a byproduct of your misguided, massive cuts to essential services like road maintenance and safety. So if you really want to do something that will perhaps get cooperation from the federal government, stand up and say that you will put aside a fixed amount of money every year out of the existing taxes that you collect. Put it into road reconstruction. Put it into a trust fund that won't go into general revenue.

As I say, 49 states do this. It works very well in the United States because you can't three years from now take from the fund and then pay for some hot political item. A 10-year fixed transit trust fund, that is what is needed. You can't have an ad hoc, every-three-months change in direction, "Oh, we're going to cut \$600 million, we're going to cut \$400 million, we're going to put \$100 million back because the heat's on." You've got to have a comprehensive investment in roads because the Auditor General told you guys when you came to office the roads are in a disastrous state. What did you do? You cut the budget severely and that is not showing that you are serious about keeping our roads in good shape.

I want to make sure that the people of Ontario understand that the responsibility for highways is provincial and this government is either blaming Ottawa or blaming the municipalities now, because they've offloaded the roads on to them. Municipalities have been cut 40% in their grants from this government. How are they going to repair the roads they're offloading? How are they going to do it? They're going to say, "Oh, no, it was your local municipality's fault."

What we do need is an understanding that if we're going to have a cohesive transportation network in this province, you have to have a balanced approach. You can't sell off GO Transit and say, "Oh, we're going to now be serious about transportation." You need an investment strategy that says people should have a choice. If they don't want to use a car they should have a reasonable choice in public transportation. You are not giving them that choice because you've basically put the investment of public transportation on the back burner. You've cut back severely there and that is not going to solve your road congestion problem. Because the more people you can get on to GO — you can imagine GO Transit, for instance; 140,000 people use it every day. If those 140,000 people got on the roads with cars, you can see the effect. In Metro alone there are about a million riders every day on public transportation. If those million riders weren't on public transportation, you can imagine the state of our roads.

So if you want good roads, and I think we all do want good roads, we have to invest in them, sure, but you can build highways till the cows come home and you won't solve the congestion problems. You have to have good

highways, good roads and you have to have good subways, good buses and good trains.

This government has said, "We're going to blame Ottawa, we're going to offload the roads and we're going to cut public transportation." That is a miserable approach to solving the congestion gridlock that exists in southern Ontario. If this government is serious, let them support a highway trust fund that they would also put money aside for every year, and not fudge it and blame Ottawa.

1130

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): We encourage all the members of the House to support Mr Hudak's resolution regarding federal funding for our national highway system. I have to discuss a couple of comments the member opposite just made in that he was the one passing the blame to Ottawa and the federal government. There isn't any blame being passed here. All we're asking for is a fair share.

Also, why then do the feds collect gas taxes in the province of Ontario? To spend on the east coast? Maybe the member would support that, but we don't.

The member stated that the province collects \$1 billion in gas taxes as well. Funny, the MTO budget is well over double that amount already.

In not addressing traffic tie-ups — what do you call the 407? Those are some of the main concerns in this area, to deal with the traffic issues.

The member for Niagara South's concerns are valid. I'd like to explain why by providing the members with some background on the issue. Many of you may not realize that the federal government stopped funding the Trans-Canada national highway system back in 1970. Since then the only federal funding for provincial highways has been through temporary or regional cost-sharing agreements. These agreements, however, do not take into consideration the national significance of the highways in question, such as whether they carry interprovincial or international trade.

To address these concerns the federal, provincial and territorial governments cooperated to identify highways they considered significant to the entire country. They came up with some 25,000 kilometres of highways from coast to coast, what we now refer to as a national highway system. While what we know as a national highway system is only 3% of Canada's roads, it carries 80% of all traffic. These are the highways that promote business and help create jobs in our great country.

Within Ontario, our portion of the national highway system consists of some 5,000 kilometres of highways. That's one fifth of the entire network. Some of these are Highways 7, 11, 17 and 69.

Because the national highway system excludes existing highways with four or more lanes, some of Ontario's most important routes do not meet the criteria for federal funding. Those include highways 400, 401, 402 and the Queen Elizabeth Way.

It should be no surprise to you that our highways are among the most heavily used for trade and tourism in Canada. In fact, Ontario's highways carry one third of Canada's exports and almost half of all imports.

Any national highway system should include Ontario's major highways and allow them to become eligible for

funding. It is obvious that a healthy and efficient provincial highway network is not only critical to Ontario's economy but to all of Canada's.

Mr Hudak was saying Ontario's highways could really use an overhaul. This government is doing something about that. We're fixing frost heaves, sealing cracks and patching holes. You may have seen my colleague the Honourable Al Palladini fixing a highway in your riding. The point is that we're spending our limited resources on preserving, not expanding our investments in roads and bridges.

Ontario pays for all its highway construction and upgrading with virtually no support from the federal government, and that investment goes towards highways that are significant to all of Canada. Let me give you an idea of how much an investment that is.

The member opposite stated that we cut the budget for roads. Here's the reality of the situation. This year we invested some \$630 million in our highways alone. That includes an extra \$140 million that we pulled together. In all we spent more on highway rehabilitation than any other Ontario government in the last six years, but that's still not enough. We could use the federal support.

Last year the Canadian government collected close to \$1 billion to \$2 billion in gas and diesel fuel taxes from Ontario, yet it did not invest one cent in our existing highway network. Mr Hudak's resolution is not asking Ottawa to increase taxes; it only asks that Ottawa commit money it already collects from road users. Ontario has the right to expect fair treatment from the federal government. Ontario is the hub of Canada's economy, and Canada simply can't afford to let any part of that national transportation system deteriorate.

I urge the members to support Mr Hudak's resolution. Our highways are the backbone of trade, tourism and safe travel in this province but they are also important to the rest of Canada.

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): I stand today to support the resolution put forward by the member for Niagara South. Obviously we need to protect and preserve our national highway system.

Many years ago both the provincial governments and the federal government implemented taking taxes from gasoline purchases. These taxes were to be used, obviously, for the maintenance and expansion of our national highways. Instead, this source of revenue has been put back into the general revenue accounts, disbursed nationally and not locally in Ontario. The federal government, in partnership with the provinces and territories, should establish some very clear and objective guidelines to the allocation of funding and use revenues from existing fuel taxes to fund the federal portion of the national highway program.

Canada, with its vast network of highways, is a country that needs a safe and seamless road infrastructure, both for the purposes of trade and in particular tourism. Tourism is a vital industry not only in Ontario but in Canada. Transportation in general is the largest single source of tourism expenditure in Canada. It accounts for about 50% of the total tourism expenditures in this country. Transportation is vital to tourism: Transportation is tourism. Leisure travel in Canada accounts

for almost 75% of the intercity trips, making tourism the largest user of passenger transportation services. Transportation is vital to the tourism industry, which depends on convenient, affordable and easy access of tourists to destinations. The quality of the transportation infrastructure of a destination is an important determinant of the strength of the tourism industry.

Tourism is an important sector of Canada's economy, not just Ontario's, contributing in 1990 an estimated \$26 billion in revenue, \$7.4 billion in foreign exchange earnings and directly employing over 600,000 Canadians.

While tourism depends on transportation, transportation is also a major beneficiary of tourism. About 45% of the total revenues generated by Canada's tourism industry is in the transportation sector.

I focus on tourism. For example, this Friday at noon in the communities of Kitchener-Waterloo, in the riding which I represent of Kitchener-Wilmot, is the official opening of the second-largest festival in Canada, Oktoberfest, the true spirit of *gemütlichkeit*, of friendship, of hospitality. It will be a major destination point for probably, depending on who is counting, up to one million visitors who will descend upon Kitchener-Waterloo and the region of Waterloo to celebrate Oktoberfest, a great Bavarian festival. It opens this Friday. It will continue for 10 days in our community. That's one of the prime examples of tourism. That's one of the vital components towards making the fabric of this great country. I emphasize Oktoberfest primarily because it occurs — the opening, this Friday, as I've said — and is a vital link in the tourism industry in my community and in the province of Ontario and in Canada.

We need leadership, not confrontation, as my learned colleague from across the floor has alluded to. We need leadership and cooperation at the federal level to ensure the future of our national highway system. I would encourage all members of the House to endorse this resolution.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara South.

Mr Hudak: Thank you to my fellow members on this side of the floor for giving me a bit more time. I had a few things I wanted to share about my riding that I didn't get a chance to talk about enough and to answer some criticism from the member for Oakwood.

The Acting Speaker: Will you just take your seat for a minute.

Mr Hudak: If the third party wants to go ahead and speak — I apologize for jumping in — I'll reserve my time for the end.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Cochrane South.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and thank you to the member across the way.

Generally, I don't have difficulty with the member's resolution. He's asking that the federal government take its responsibility towards the maintenance and construction of our highway infrastructure as a national program. The parliamentary assistant is quite right: The federal

government has been quite remiss in its duties when it comes to national transportation over the years. They've pulled out of highway transportation and now with the Chrétien government they're also pulling out of rail transportation, which is another issue altogether.

I agree with the member across the way who says we need to urge the federal government, Mr Chrétien and his government, to come forward and play a vital role in making sure that the highway infrastructure in this province and across this country is to the standard that it needs to be, because we all recognize, as members of this assembly, that highway infrastructure is very important to the economic survival of our economy. On that part, I do agree that the federal government does have to take its role.

The other example is that the federal government has removed itself from the transportation industry — from rail, which I think is a disaster, especially for the western provinces, with the removal of the Crow rate. There's the whole issue of what they have done in regard to the selling off of our national railway. They have moved themselves out of the airline industry. I think in the long run — we've had this debate in the House before — those things cumulatively are not going to bode well for the province of Ontario as the economic engine that drives Canada. With a weaker infrastructure of transportation and telecommunications, I don't see that as being particularly advantageous.

Where I part company with the member, though, is on a designated tax. We've had these kinds of resolutions before in the House, where members have asked to designate a particular tax towards a particular function the provincial government has a responsibility for. Individually, if you look at this resolution as one resolution that stands alone, it makes some sense. You say, "We'll designate some tax dollars from the federal government and we'll designate some tax dollars from the provincial government, from the retail sales tax through to the excise tax, to maintain our highways."

I guess individually it makes some sense, but the problem is that once you enter into this it's a slippery road, because then what you do is send a message out to the public of Ontario that, "If your priority as you see it is important enough for this Legislature to support by a designated tax, you will get dollars to support that particular initiative."

Things such as highways I imagine would get the nod from the public in regard to funding. I imagine many of the services in health care would probably get the nod. But I think there are a lot of other services that government offers, that need to be offered, that may not get the nod, and we would be very caught up in this House in playing politics of taxation as they relate to programs.

On that point, I have a problem. I'm a little torn as to how to vote on this thing because on the one hand I want the federal government to take its responsibility — I think the member is right, the federal government has to pay its fair share — when it comes to transportation, but I have a problem when it comes to designating taxes.

The province of Ontario and the federal government of Canada have responsibilities. They should own up to those responsibilities. We have a taxation system that's

quite broad in the sense of provincial sales taxes, fuel taxes, provincial income taxes, such that the pool of all of those dollars is to be designated by cabinet to particular issues and particular areas that we need to cover. As a New Democrat, I would much rather see that approach where it's a corporate approach on the part of the government about how it sets its priorities and then how it funds that.

We'll listen to the rest of the wrapup on the part of the member across the way in regard to the final vote, but I just want the member to know — voting for or against, no matter what — the federal government needs to take its responsibility.

I do, however, have a bit of a problem with a Conservative member coming before this House and yelling the fair share of the federal government argument. We as a government under Bob Rae made that argument for four to five years. We said the federal government was not taking its responsibility when it came to Ontario. The federal government has abandoned the province of Ontario; I agree with the member. But where I have a bit of a problem, although I do support what he's trying to do here, is that when your party was in opposition you ran against us on that. You were saying all we were doing was whining at the feds, trying to offload our responsibility to the federal government. You asked us to take our responsibility and stop blaming Ottawa. You played that game in opposition, and now that you've come to government you've finally come the way of the New Democrats, which is, "We need to get the federal government to take its responsibility."

The federal government, when it comes to everything from highway transportation to social services to health care, has really let the province of Ontario down. They're playing less and less of a role when it comes to funding. It is putting many of the services in this province at jeopardy. When I see what's happening in Ontario to the health care system, I say yes, the Minister of Health, the Honourable Jim Wilson, and the government of Ontario have a huge responsibility because they make the decisions about where the dollars go. Obviously I think his decisions are having a negative effect on health care, but we can't let the federal government off the hook. They have to take some responsibility. They're the ones who are cutting the funding and they're the ones who are going to block funding, and with the result of that our health care system and our transportation system are really left in a bit of a situation.

In the last bit of time I have to present, though, I want to go over some of the numbers that we spent on transportation, because I've heard the Minister of Transportation on a number of occasions going across the province of Ontario and talking about how much money he's spending on highway transportation capital budgets. He goes to great length to talk about how much money he's spending and how he's doing more than any other government has ever done in highway transportation. In defence of the Honourable Gilles Pouliot, the former Minister of Transportation, you guys had better compare apples to apples and not oranges to apples. The work that Mr Pouliot did as Minister of Transportation was far

more than what this government is now doing with capital infrastructure on highways.

What we did was fund highway construction from two different pots. One pot was the capital budget of the Ministry of Transportation, which was around \$750 million a year in 1994-95, the last year of our government. But in addition to that, and what the member and the cabinet minister forget to mention, is that there was a Jobs Ontario component to the capital budget, which was about another \$700 million. I'm going by memory, but it seems to me that the capital budget of the Ministry of Transportation — dollars in the construction of new roads, reconstruction of existing roads, resurfacing — was somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$1.4 billion total in 1994-95, the last year of our government. This year, 1996-97, it's less than it was before. Your estimates show that you actually are going to spend about \$1.2 billion overall.

Where is that dollar going? Some of that money is going where it needs to go in regard to the reconstruction of many needed roads, but if we were to go around Ontario this summer and think back to what was being done, most of what we saw was resurfacing; it was black-topping. If I were the Minister of Transportation and I were looking at a way to spend money and to spread it around really thin so that everybody thought something was going on in Ontario, I would spend my money on resurfacing, because you can spend, depending on which kind of highway it is, a little amount of money to do a lot of resurfacing in a whole bunch of places and it looks like there's a lot of activity. Was it needed? Of course, it was needed. I don't suggest for one second that the Minister of Transportation resurfaced parts of highways that didn't need to be done. Quite the opposite: They needed to be done. But it wasn't a question where the government was actually spending money on new road construction to the point that the previous NDP government was doing, and it's not a question of rebuilding roads.

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There were a number of projects that were cancelled under the Conservative government. I can think of some of them in northern Ontario. The four-laning between Huntsville and North Bay was something we were going to go forward with and we were going to do it at an accelerated pace. The government has cut that back. I think they're going to be doing about 10 kilometres per year. There are about 100 kilometres to go, so that's a fairly long-term project. It's cut back from where we were going to go. I think that stretch of highway, quite frankly, is significant. It needs to be done. I would have thought with the Premier living in North Bay that that stretch of highway would have got some kind of support on the part of the Premier, to say we need the four-lane Huntsville up to Powassan. Quite frankly, the traffic on that highway is too heavy for a two-lane highway and we need to move to four lanes.

I think of the road in Sultan. Highway 144 over to Sultan needed to be done in order to collect into Chapleau. It was something again that our government was going forward with that was cancelled by the Conservative government.

We all remember last winter the effect of highway conditions as they related to the expenditures of the Ministry of Transportation when it came to winter road maintenance. As I was talking earlier to my friend the member from Renfrew, Mr Conway, I drive a significant amount of time from Timmins to Toronto return. I probably do somewhere in the neighbourhood of about 20 or 25 trips a year by my own vehicle as I come to Queen's Park to represent the people of Cochrane South. I'll tell you, there's no way in heck you're going to get me on that highway again in the middle of winter if you guys are going to do what you did last year.

In trips that I did up to Timmins, I can remember in some circumstances finding as many as 15 cars in the ditch because roads were not properly salted, roads were not properly plowed. Rather than having a road that should be bare at the given point in time, roads a day and two days after a storm or after a snow-up had not been properly cleared and the roads were just treacherous. People were complaining in northern Ontario, and we brought those cases here to Queen's Park on many occasions. North of North Bay, driving on Highway 11, and north of Sudbury, driving on 144, those roads, quite frankly, you were white-knuckle driving.

I own a Ranger pickup truck, and you would think with a pickup you'd be in better shape than most people. You couldn't hold the highway at reduced speeds. If the speed limit was 100 kilometres an hour, you could drive that highway at 70 kilometres an hour and you were lucky if you held on to the highway. Like I say, I don't know how many times I travelled that highway where I would count 10 and 15 cars that went into the ditch, not because they were speeding, not because they were not paying attention to their driving situation, but because, quite frankly, the highways were in an atrocious state.

I say to the Minister of Transportation, I will be watching that situation quite closely this winter, as will every other person who lives in northern Ontario, because we in northern Ontario will not stand for one more winter of bad highway maintenance. We need our highways not only for our economy. We need the highways for ourselves, to be able to traverse across northern Ontario for every other reason, from travelling for medical appointments to travel in order to get around to see people and to do business. If we don't have good highways, we can't do much of that.

I don't know how many times, I say again, I saw trucks and cars in the ditch last winter. I talked to people who were in sales who were not able to travel in order to keep appointments for the sale of the goods they were doing because the highways were not properly maintained. So I will be watching out on that.

The other thing is, I just want to point out to the member across the way that he talks about the commitment on the part of the provincial government towards our system of highways. I think if you look at the expenditure estimates, you'll notice that in many cases there's a lot of money that has been cut back on transportation, especially how it affects municipalities. As an example, in 1995-96, the municipal road subsidies were \$706 million. What was it this year? It was \$119 million. That means all of those roads that municipalities are

responsible for maintaining have been cut significantly, and with that cut they are less able to respond to keeping those highways up to the standard they need to.

On top of that, the government is offloading its responsibility for many provincial highways that go through municipalities on to the municipalities. In Timmins, we're being offloaded with a number of highways. Our mayor and council in the city of Timmins, Mr Power and his council, are saying, "You transfer those roads over, you're telling us we're going to get one-time funding, but after a couple of years it's going to be directly out of the assessment base of the people of the city of Timmins."

I would say that's the argument of most mayors and councils out there. You hand those highways over, all it means to say is that it looks awful good on the books of the province of Ontario. Mr Palladini and Mr Wilson — or I should say Mr Eves and Mr Harris — can crow about how smart they are and how they've managed to reduce the expenditures of the Ministry of Transportation, but what really they've done is they have quite frankly offloaded their responsibilities from their level of government on to the municipal taxpayers.

What's going to happen? I would imagine after the next municipal election, municipalities across this province are going to get hit with municipal tax increases on the basis of not only this cut that you've done to municipalities but a number of other cuts that you've done. I say that's not the way that we need to work. If you guys are serious about trying to get your house in order, you need to sit down with your municipal partners and figure out how that's going to happen in some kind of equitable way. You can't just offload it to the municipalities, then sit there and crow and say how smart you are that you've managed to balance your books, because you may have cleaned off your books but you've dirtied somebody else's quite significantly.

So I say to the member across the way, the resolution is not a bad one. We're asking the federal government to take its fair share. I applaud you; I think that is right. I only wish that the Conservatives in opposition under Mr Harris would have agreed with us when we were in government and were saying to the Chrétien and Mulroney governments that they weren't paying their fair share, that Harris would have come on side. It took him going into government to come up with this concept. I guess that says something about how long it takes him to figure out what's going on. Better late than never. We support you on that point.

On the question of designating taxes towards a specific function of the provincial government, I think that's a slippery slope, as I said before. You start designating taxes to specific services and I think a whole bunch of services that are crucial out there to many people will not get funding because it will not be politically saleable in some cases in this Legislature. I think women and other people out there would be the ones who would be negatively affected.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to make comment on behalf of my party.

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): To be very clear about something as the debate winds down and we go to the vote, the fact is that the backdrop for this

debate is a debt of \$100 billion for the province of Ontario, debt servicing costs annually in the order of \$10 billion. Let's keep that in the background. We have a government that is committed to expenditure controls and a deliberate attempt to get a handle on the affairs of this province.

As it does that, it finds itself still committed to a number of expenditures that it must make, not least of which, as we've heard from the parliamentary assistant, are expenditures in the area of road repairs and maintenance in excess of anything spent by this province in the past six years. So we see good management; we're doing better with less. But at the same time we find ourselves being squeezed increasingly by the robber barons in Ottawa. We find the Liberal Party taking more and more money from us and we find a federal minister standing yesterday in the House crowing about the new balance statements for the federal government without saying on whose back that new balance has been found.

Let me suggest that we find ourselves with a federal government that is taking more and more out of this province, and the \$2-billion theft from the taxpayers of Ontario is only a small part of that dollar that's flowing out to Ottawa and no money coming back in for the taxpayers of Ontario. Let me suggest that \$2 billion goes out of Ontario and nothing comes back in. No, perhaps I'm a little wrong. I remember that the Honourable Art Eggleton did turn up in Toronto a few days ago and offered a couple of million dollars for the TTC subway. Now, that's not bad out of \$2 billion to give back to the people of Ontario. Frankly, I find that an insult.

More than that, we find all kinds of money being taken out of the provincial economy as we find ways to restructure the welfare rolls. The federal government pays 50 cents of every dollar paid and yet we've heard nothing from the finance minister of what has happened to that 50 cents or the millions and millions of dollars the federal government has saved in that area. So we find in that area alone more savings that allow Mr Martin to crow about a new balance statement, but on the backs of the Ontario taxpayers, and frankly that has to stop. The gasoline tax alone: 10 cents of every litre flowing to Ottawa, nothing flowing back into Ontario. That has to stop.

We talked about downloading. My good friend from Cochrane talks about downloading. He knows as well as I know: \$3.7 billion cut by the federal government to Ontario in transfer payments. Can we really put up with that?

Mr Colle: Whine, whine, whine.

Mr Shea: My colleague, the apologist for the Liberal government in Ottawa who represents the riding of Oakwood, suggests that we're whining, suggests that's the same kind of a phrase the owner of the poorhouse used to poor Oliver Twist when he said, "Please, sir, may I have more porridge?" The fact is, I think it's a shameful thing that he would even say that in this House.

The Ontario taxpayers have a right to be treated better than they're being treated now, and this motion at least begins to try to address that imbalance.

Mr Hudak: Thanks to my colleague from High Park-Swansea: an excellent endorsement of my resolution.

Thanks also to the member for Cochrane South for his constructive comments, and I anticipate that he will be supporting the resolution as well.

Unfortunately, I'm not sure how the transportation critic from Oakwood feels about this issue. From time to time here in the back benches we like to muse about the parties opposite, who's running for the leadership and that sort of thing. Some of us thought the member for Oakwood might possibly run for the leadership. From the transportation critic's point of view, he's a hardworking member with some experience in the Metro area. He's a good-looking guy. He looks good on camera, very pleasant, and some very strong policies on transportation, some very strong transportation policies like the squeegee issue. So you certainly see a lot of leadership in that area.

But we truly see where he stands in the provincial scene with that stalwart defence of the federal government. He doesn't want the federal government to help out in transportation. He doesn't want them to participate. In fact, the federal government was way more receptive to this idea on Monday than the member opposite. It's not part of his strategy. Perhaps the reason he's objecting to this resolution is because maybe he wants to run federally next time. He doesn't want to help out in Ontario, obviously; he wants to help out in Ottawa.

I'm more optimistic than the member opposite. I think the federal government, in the context of the infrastructure program, is very much in tune with this issue. I would anticipate and I look for the support of my members in Niagara, like John Maloney, the hardworking MP for the riding of Erie, who I think shows a bit more sense, a bit more commitment to this issue than the transportation critic opposite. I think in the context of the federal infrastructure program this is the best use of the money. City halls and lawn bowling courts and such are one thing. They maybe create some short-term jobs, they're good for the community culturally, but they don't create long-term jobs.

In terms of putting money into highways for a smoother, seamless transportation system for tourism and trade, that's long-term job creation. That's what this government was elected for, long-term job creation. To ask for just 20% of what the feds currently take out of Ontario motorists' pockets to be put back into the national highway system is not asking for a lot. In fact, from Ontario's point of view, the transportation critic said \$1 billion is coming in. He's the transportation critic and I'll take his word that he knows his figures as transportation critic. MTO's budget, as the hardworking PA Jerry Ouellette said, is \$2 billion. So we're way past that. I'm just asking for two pennies out of the 10 cents they take out of the fuel tax for long-term job creation in Canada, in Ontario, and most importantly in the Niagara Peninsula.

The hardworking member for Brantford, Mr Ron Johnson, I know is trying to help build the 403 to his city. I'm visiting there tonight. I'm looking forward to it and I know he's going to back me on the bill as well.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Hudak has moved private member's resolution number 26. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

It now being 12 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I wish to raise a very serious issue of the Parkdale Beach Child Care Centre. The Toronto Board of Education is in the process of replacing or renovating four elementary schools: Island Public School/Island Outdoor Natural Science School, Lord Dufferin Public School, Eglinton Junior Public School, Spectrum Alternative Senior School and the Queen Victoria Public School.

Budgets approved for school renovations do not include financing to replace the space currently being used for the school-based child care centres. The Toronto Board of Education does not have the financial capacity or the authority in policy to fund the child care facilities. If no funds are found, 214 child care spaces may be eliminated in these schools.

In the past, when new replacement schools were constructed to include child care, financing for these child care facilities came from other sources, in almost all cases from the province of Ontario. These child care centres have requested funding from the province. However, the response by the Minister of Community and Social Services is, "My ministry will no longer provide funding for child care centres in new schools."

Two days ago I attended a briefing session at Queen Victoria Junior Public School and I saw how the Parkdale Beach Child Care Centre cares for the children. With a school enrolment currently at 850, we expect that these children will have a future.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): The city of London and the community around it have been concerned for a number of years about PCBs in our community. Today I have both good news and bad news for this Legislature in terms of the cleanup of those PCBs. The good news is that London Hydro has just about cleaned up all the PCBs they were responsible for, and that was about two thirds of the PCBs that were being stored within the confines of London and city. It's extremely important for us to understand that this involved a \$5-million commitment, and the last contracts in that \$5-million allocation have now been awarded and we can expect that the process with London Hydro will be completed. But our city still has one third of the PCBs that were stored in our confines there.

I call today upon this Legislature, particularly upon the Minister of Environment to use his influence and to use the facilities that the province has, to encourage the governments at all three levels to push for the elimination of PCBs that are stored within London. We still have health concerns around the numbers that are still there, and it needs the political will of the provincial government as well as the municipal and federal levels to accomplish a cleanup.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I rise today to congratulate the boards of directors of two hospitals in

Chatham, the Public General and St Joseph's, for following up on a recent decision to form the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance. The two boards have now unanimously agreed to pursue the preferred option recommended by their consultant to close one facility and merge all services at one location. As with most communities, the people of Chatham are struggling to maintain two facilities, each operating at a fraction of its bed capacity.

This decision will see the historical integrity of the two 100-year-old institutions maintained while hospital-based health care moves forward with an affordable, efficient model. The process will take three years to complete and the estimated savings are 11 million taxpayer dollars per year.

It should be noted that the Kent County Medical Society is in strong support of the plan to consolidate hospital-based services.

The board members of the hospitals have recognized the need for change and have made a very difficult decision.

I invite all my colleagues to please join me in congratulating the people of Chatham and Kent county for their wisdom and foresight.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): All of us in Thunder Bay are still reeling from the decision handed down by the Health Services Restructuring Commission last week. Many of us believe that what the commission and the Minister of Health have ordered us to accept is, and will be, woefully inadequate in the years to come.

On top of the decision to cut our beds in half and to close three of our hospitals, another shocking decision was made by the minister, rather quietly, may I say, which dramatically affects the capital funding area.

On June 27, the very day the commission brought down its initial report in Thunder Bay, the minister decided to slash the provincial contribution for capital funding from two thirds to 50%. What that means in Thunder Bay terms is that not only is the minister imposing a decision on us that may not nearly meet our health care needs in Thunder Bay and that doesn't respond to the clear wishes of our community, but now we're expected to find \$45 million of our own money to implement this order, with no regard for whether or not we can, as a community, raise those funds.

We now learn that the minister and the cabinet are talking about how to deal with the funding issues. Well, they certainly should. When you remove a net amount of \$31 million annually from a community for its health care and then you tell the community that they must also raise \$45 million to build what may be inadequate facilities, you are no longer operating in a just or democratic fashion.

The Minister of Health must change his decision on capital funding, not just to its previous level, but a level that would allow us to ensure that whatever funds we can raise on our own will guarantee us the health care services we need and are entitled to.

ST ALBAN'S BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm delighted today to pay tribute to two young women who are active at St

Alban's Boys' and Girls' Club in my riding who are among the recipients this year of the scholarships established through the Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario.

The first recipient is Paulina Arruda, who has volunteered at St Alban's for five years in programs like summer camp, children's services, administration, and recently she obtained a part-time receptionist position. Paulina has applied to a three-year business administration co-op program at Humber College where she hopes to become an administrative assistant.

As part of her other involvement with the club, she serves as a liaison person to the Christie-Ossington community centre as well as being the editor and graphic designer of St Alban's quarterly newspaper.

She has demonstrated tremendous organizational abilities by organizing a picnic for 700 and a Spooktacular Halloween event that boasted 200 children.

The second recipient is Rosaria Zompanti, who is continuing in accounting at Brock University. As part of her involvement with St Alban's club she has volunteered extensively for five years. She's been the president of the Keystone Club, a youth representative on the board of directors and a supervisor of the games room. Presently, at the Niagara Club she spends Monday evenings helping out with the bingo for the Niagara Keystone Club while attending university full-time.

Academically, Rosaria has taken part in the volunteer tax clinic, which helped other students file their taxes free of charge. She was also a Brock business ambassador to local high schools.

To them, my congratulations as well.

OKTOBERFEST

Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot): I would like to inform all members of the House and the people of Ontario that starting this Friday, tomorrow, at noon is the official keg tapping at the beautiful downtown city of Kitchener city hall and it will conclude the following Saturday. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the annual Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest celebration.

Every year, over a million visitors converge on Kitchener-Waterloo to enjoy the sights and sounds of the world's second-largest Bavarian festival. Oktoberfest has been a tradition in the K-W area for over 28 years and contributes millions of dollars to the local economy and to the various charities.

I encourage everyone to experience this traditional festival in Kitchener-Waterloo. "Das Oktoberfest ist wunderbar," as we say in Kitchener-Waterloo; "Gemütlichkeit," which is "hospitality."

1340

HOSPITAL SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I want to bring to the attention of the Minister of Health an issue with regard to hospital CEOs, mergers and payouts in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth. As a result of the merger between Chedoke-McMaster and Hamilton Civic, there's been a \$1.3-million severance package given to two CEOs over the last couple of months.

The Hamilton Civic Hospitals had the courtesy to do it openly and to publicly reveal the information. The Chedoke-McMaster board chose not to. As a result, a severance package of almost \$1 million to a CEO had to be leaked and given out in bits and pieces.

Minister, at a time of fiscal restraint, at a time of cutbacks, at a time of hospital closures, a \$1-million severance package is obscene. It is gross. It is disgraceful behaviour by a responsible board.

The time has come for you to act. This is going to continue to happen across Ontario. I am asking the minister today to amend the Public Disclosures Act to ensure that any severance package in excess of \$100,000 is publicly revealed when it is given. Secondly, I am asking the minister to ensure that there is a cap placed on severance packages, that they cannot equal more than one year's salary of the CEO.

If we're willing to put a cap on doctors' salaries, if we're willing to cap service across Ontario, Minister, you must be willing to cap these outrageous settlements that are happening across Ontario. I ask the minister to act now because this is critical not only for Hamilton but for the province. If you fail to do that, I will bring in a private member's bill to hopefully bring that along.

LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I want to address my remarks to all those who might be watching today who care at all about the environment, child care, seniors, health care, housing, education or jobs.

I particularly want to address those who are non-union workers. I want to draw their attention to the strike that's taking place right now with tens of thousands of workers between the Canadian Auto Workers and General Motors, and also Steelworkers who are on strike with S.A. Armstrong, as examples of the kinds of people who are out on the forefront of taking this government on. The labour movement is far from perfect and they never pretend to be, but in terms of fighting for things that matter in this province and putting it on the line and being out there for things like the environment and housing and children and women's rights, the labour movement is lock-step in partnership with everybody who cares about those issues.

It's now time for the other partners out there to recognize that these strikes need to be supported. If this government, in partnership and in cahoots with General Motors — because you're all buddies coming from the same direction — can take on the CAW and take on the Steelworkers, what chance have you got out there on your own? Be very, very clear. If we don't hang together, surely this government will hang us all separately.

MEMBER FOR OTTAWA CENTRE

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I was astonished, as the member for Ottawa Centre can appreciate, by his attempt to demonstrate some political acumen here yesterday with the help of a 17-year-old student from my riding. The member waved around a video produced by the student from Carleton Place High School depicting the alleged disrepair of that building.

I spoke to the director of education in Lanark county and I gathered two things about what the member did. One, the member for Ottawa Centre has less than a passing acquaintance with the facts of my riding. That video was filmed before the roof was installed. Second, he is more interested in scoring political points by using students from another riding than he is concerned about improving education.

This tactic is unbecoming of colleagues of this House. The member, some school principals and some students are buying into a fearmongering campaign by the teachers' union, which will use anyone or any means to defend the status quo. The status quo will not work. As stated by the minister, we will lift the freeze on capital projects in a way that makes the best possible use of taxpayers' dollars.

SPECIAL REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table a special report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO-QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AGREEMENT

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm pleased to inform members of the Legislature that earlier today, in a speech to the Ottawa Construction Association, my colleague the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, announced that an agreement in principle was reached last night with the government of Quebec on construction mobility between our two provinces.

This government believes that open borders, free trade and the unimpeded flow of labour, goods and services are vital to the economic growth of this province and the rest of Canada. Ontario's goal throughout these long and difficult negotiations has been to achieve a more level playing field for Ontario contractors and workers, meaning faster, easier and equal access to construction work in Quebec. We have been committed to doing this by removing the major obstacles to access as identified by those in the construction industry. I am pleased to say that we have achieved our objective.

Under the agreement Quebec will permanently exempt qualified Ontario contractors from Quebec exams and provide them with building contractors' licences within 24 hours of application so they may bid immediately on Quebec projects; eliminate the need for Ontario workers to obtain duplicate certification in Quebec; grant face-value recognition of Ontario's certificates of qualification and apprentice ID cards; and give broader recognition to workers with certificates of apprenticeship and provisional certificates. The Quebec government has agreed to put the necessary legislation in place this fall and is

firmly committed to full implementation of the agreement by the end of the year.

I'd like to acknowledge the leadership of Premier Harris in pressing this issue with the government of Quebec during his meeting with Premier Bouchard this past May. We are grateful for the cooperation of Premier Bouchard and the Quebec Minister of Labour, M. Rioux, in working with us to resolve these issues. The support and active involvement of the MPPs from eastern Ontario has been invaluable in setting the ground work for the agreement and I thank them for their efforts. I congratulate Minister Witmer on her achievement this past week and I am sure all members of the Legislature will join me in this acknowledgement.

We have all shared the frustrations and concerns of the construction workers and contractors of Ontario, who will now have greatly improved access to work in Quebec. True labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec will lead to a healthier construction industry and a stronger economy on both sides of the border.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): On behalf of my colleagues, I want to respond to Ms Cunningham's statement on behalf of the government with respect to interprovincial labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec. We have, apparently, an agreement in principle. Obviously my colleagues and I will look very carefully at what this agreement in principle produces on the ground, because I must say we have been here before. We have had agreements in principle before. My friend the former minister, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, might want to comment about that.

We have an agreement in principle that is apparently going to ameliorate some of the extraordinary irritants that exist in my part of eastern Ontario and elsewhere across the Ontario-Quebec frontier. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate not just the minister and her colleagues in council, but particularly my colleague Jean-Marc Lalonde, the member for Prescott and Russell, for his leadership in this assembly over the last few months in bringing the concerns to the government and to the assembly at large. Mr Lalonde is today in his home county. I have spoken to him and he tells me that this agreement in principle still leaves a lot of unresolved business. His first reflection suggests that, for example, this agreement in principle is still going to mean that Ontario workers, in doing business in Quebec, are apparently going to have to belong to a Quebec trade union or worker association. That apparently is not going to be a reciprocal condition on Quebec workers in Ontario.

1350

I want to say that the proof of this agreement will be in the eating of the pudding. We will all applaud progress. It is a scandal for our Canadian federation that we've got these kinds of interprovincial barriers to trade and the mobility of our labour force. As a Canadian living in Ontario, I want to believe that to the greatest extent possible there is going to be the free movement of capital and labour across all aspects of the Dominion. We have not had that in our part of eastern Ontario and northeastern Ontario. The situation, notwithstanding the good work and the good intentions of the Rae-Lankin agreement of two years ago, did not improve. My

colleagues from the east and from elsewhere in the region, and that includes northeastern Ontario, are hopeful that this recalcitrance from our friends in Quebec is going to change, not just in word but in agreement in principle, because it didn't change the last time.

I repeat that my colleague Mr Lalonde is not able to be here today, because like the Minister of Labour he too is in the national capital region. His initial response is that this is not as much progress as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs would have us believe. Any progress, and I want to be fair, is going to be appreciated, but in the current environment we have been told, and it has been told to me by several people, that Quebec contractors are manipulating the Ontario retail sales to their particular advantage on Ontario government contracts in communities like Hawkesbury and Ottawa and Gloucester and Mattawa and Tri-town. I'm fully expecting that this is going to change.

We will see what we shall see. I applaud particularly my colleague Mr Lalonde for the excellent work he has done and continues to do, and his vigilance will continue with this agreement in principle.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I say on behalf of our party that we're pleased when progress is made on this issue. We're pleased to see the issue becoming more clearly defined and steps being taken to build on the agreement that was in place. But I found it passing strange — well, perhaps that's not true; I found it quite typical of this government — to hear a good-news announcement in which they congratulated their minister, their Premier and their eastern Ontario members and made no reference to the fact that the first groundbreaking agreement that started this process, on which they are building, was conducted by the previous government. From my own point of view, I felt a little disappointed personally because I played a fairly meaningful role in making progress on this issue, with the help of the current Minister of Environment and Energy. I think we worked very effectively on behalf of the residents of eastern Ontario.

The agreement that was arrived at by the previous government had three or four areas, which you see listed here, in which ongoing work was to begin. What I think is a shame is that we're a year and a half into the mandate of this new government and it is only now — and I'll give credit to the Minister of Labour since she's taken a hold of this file — that we've seen progress and seen new agreements being arrived at. Unfortunately, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has dropped the ball completely with respect to the issue of internal trade and interprovincial trade. It is a shame because there are issues beyond Quebec and Ontario that need to be dealt with in this Dominion, issues that relate to the free movement of goods and labour and service, and there is progress yet to be made there.

It's been very clear from the editorials and from the comments of writers like Shawn McCarthy in the Toronto Star that the federal government places the blame for the lack of progress in interprovincial trade agreements squarely on the shoulders of the current Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism and his lack of interest in that particular part of his portfolio.

May I say, with respect to this particular agreement, there are questions I have outstanding and that I think that the people of eastern Ontario should have with respect to what we're actually hearing here today. The question of membership in trade unions, membership in Ontario versus membership in Quebec, is still a very big unresolved issue. I don't see it answered here. It was one of the remaining issues to be negotiated, and it appears that progress hasn't been made on that.

With respect to health and safety certification, we see trade certification and we see apprenticeship mentioned in these achievements, but what about the health and safety certification requirements that Quebec has and was insisting on placing on Ontario workers coming across the border? It's not referred to here. If that's still in place, that's a barrier, and a barrier which will prevent Ontario workers from crossing the border.

One of the things that gives me the most cause for concern is the last bullet point, which says the agreement gives "broader recognition to workers with certificates of apprenticeship and provisional certificates." In fact, we were far down the road in having equivalency recognized for trades and trade certificates; the large area of disagreement was with respect to what Quebec refers to in the Ontario workforce as the unskilled worker, the unskilled labourer, which is by far the vast majority of the Ontario workers on construction sites by Quebec standards. If that issue hasn't been dealt with, again Ontario contractors and Ontario workers will not be able to meet the requirements of Quebec and will not be able to bid on those jobs. That's a very important issue, and it is not addressed here.

We see nothing in terms of progress on the issue of Quebec regions and access to what regions. I think we made significant progress on that. Perhaps this government has in fact accepted the work that the previous government had done and feels there is no need to improve upon that. It would have been nice to have that reflected in the minister's statement. It would be nice to know what their opinion is on that, the issue of Quebec regions and what regions Ontario contractors and workers have access to, because you know there are no regions in Ontario. We have a free open market in which Quebec is able to bid on jobs. I'd like an answer to that as well.

In closing, let me just say that the outstanding issues with respect to Quebec-Ontario remain very important. We need clarity on them. I congratulate the government if progress has indeed been made. If there are outstanding issues, I'd like a report of that so we can monitor the effect of this for the construction industry, those contractors and workers in Quebec.

May I say to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, get on with it with respect to the interprovincial trade negotiations. It is crucial to this country's economy. It is crucial to fair play for Ontario employers and Ontario workers and Ontario contractors that they have access to those other markets as they have access to Ontario.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'll stand before the House to comment on the question put by the mem-

ber for Dovercourt yesterday. I spent some time reviewing the previous decisions and the standing orders of the Legislature. The matter was dealt with at committee yesterday, or the day before, now. The matter that was raised by the member for Dovercourt is one which falls within the authority of the government agencies committee. The Speaker does not intervene in a matter that is before a duly constituted standing or select committee unless that matter is appealed to the Speaker by a majority of members of the committee. It's very straightforward and very simple. Further to that, the position of the Chair of all standing committees duly constituted would be untenable if members could come to this House and appeal decisions made by the Chair.

As I said yesterday, I listened carefully, I reviewed the situation, and to the member for Dovercourt and the House, there is clear delineation in the standing orders that the Chair's decisions stand unless a majority of members wish to have it appealed to the Legislature. I don't see that majority; therefore, I cannot hear it.

CORRECTION

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to correct the record of my comments as they appear in Hansard on October 8 on page 4407. It's with respect to a question placed to the Minister of Community and Social Services on child care centres. The statement refers to \$40 million in capital budgets in the Ministry of Community and Social Services, \$10.5 million in the Ministry of Education and Training, both of which have been cut. I said, "That was a \$50-million budget line between the two ministries that's been cut to \$83,000." It appears in Hansard as "\$15 million." I'd like to correct that to \$50 million. It appears at two different places within the question.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. It's noted and will stand corrected.

1400

ORAL QUESTIONS

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): My question is for the Solicitor General. For the past three days we have heard the Premier, the Solicitor General and the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations deny any knowledge of the secret report on organized crime and gambling. The Solicitor General refused to release the report, claiming that he knew nothing about it and hadn't even read it. Today we learn in an article by Richard Brennan in the Windsor Star that the Premier's office was given a briefing on the secret report. Will you admit that your government was briefed on this report in the spring of this year? Will you admit that the Premier knew about this report and that you knew about this report?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): The answer is clearly no, the Premier was not given a briefing. There was an article, I gather, in the Windsor Star. A one-page issue note outlining the general concerns of policing was provided to the Premier's office. But I have not seen the re-

port. It would be inappropriate for me or any member of government to see the report. As I indicated earlier, this is an internal policing document, an intelligence report which was circulated within the policing community.

Mr Cordiano: It seems to me that the minister and the Premier have stretched this orchestrated charade of plausible denial beyond any sense of credibility. We're calling on the Solicitor General to come clean.

I have in my possession a copy of the briefing note that was prepared by the police officer — here it is — and the ministry and given to the Premier's office. I want to note the date of this briefing note, March 18, 1996. The briefing note says very clearly, "The analysis shows that illegal gambling flourishes in Ontario and there is potential for abuse in the legal gaming sector." Will the Solicitor General tell this House when he received a copy of this report? When did he receive a copy of the briefing note on this report?

Hon Mr Runciman: This is bordering on the ridiculous with respect to the opposition's position on this. Chief Fantino, who's the chair of the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, said last night: "The report was never intended for political or public consumption. It is an operational report." This is Chief Fantino of the city of London police service: "It is an operational report" — think about that word "operational" — "not a political report." Also, my ministry, at my request, provided a legal opinion and indicated that if the Solicitor General was to read a CISO intelligence report, that could raise a perception of and concern about the Solicitor General's interference in policing matters.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Nonsense.

Hon Mr Runciman: Do you want to listen to this? "We are not aware of any Solicitor General ever requesting or reviewing such an intelligence report."

Mr Cordiano: What nonsense, total and utter nonsense. Let's call this what this is: This is nothing but a coverup. It's a concealment of fact. You attempt to deny that there was ever a report, you attempt to deny that you ever got a briefing note and you do not want to share this with the rest of us. You expect this House to believe that neither you nor the Premier nor anyone in his office ever knew of the contents of this report. I cannot believe that the minister would stand up here today and hope that we would understand that he didn't have the contents of this report. How could he stand up today? How could he think that we're going to believe him today?

Hon Mr Runciman: I can say that, apparently unlike the Liberals of the past, this government believes in playing by the rules, and the rules are that we do not interfere in the operational matters of police. We do not stick our nose into private intelligence reports that are supposed to remain within the policing community. We don't want to know who the police are targeting. We don't want to know those kinds of things because they are not within the purview of the political arm. There's that separation between policing and the government, as I've indicated in this House on a number of occasions when they accuse us, they accuse me, they accuse the government of interfering in operational matters. We hear this on a regular basis. Now they're saying, "Interfere."

They should get their house in order. We're playing by the rules.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): New question, the member for Lawrence.

Mr Cordiano: This is incredible. The Premier, the minister and their government have had —

The Speaker: Who is your question to?

Mr Cordiano: It's to the same minister. They've had in their possession since the spring a police report linking organized crime to legalized gambling. Are you so desperate to fund your tax cut that you would ignore the police report and cover up the fact that you've even seen it? How could you possibly do this to the people of this province?

Hon Mr Runciman: As I understand it from the press reports, this study was commissioned when the former government, the NDP government, was moving towards a casino in Windsor. The concerns were related to the infiltration of organized crime into casino gambling. I think that was primarily the focus. I'm basing this on press reports. We know that despite a report commissioned by the now leader of the NDP which in effect substantiated those concerns or agreed with those kinds of concerns, the NDP went ahead. They indicated to us at the time that they were taking the appropriate steps to ensure that organized crime would not be allowed to infiltrate casino gambling in this province.

We've indicated quite clearly, when the policing community has expressed concerns related to VLTs or whatever other operation with respect to organized gambling, that we would put in the necessary resources. The Treasurer is quoted as saying — this is from an Ottawa Citizen story of May 9 — "As soon as government-approved machines are in place at racetracks and charity casinos, police will be given more resources to hunt for illegal machines." Our position is quite clear.

Mr Cordiano: Total nonsense. The report — and I want to quote from it again — clearly indicates, "Legalized gambling has never replaced illegal gambling, which has increased with interest shown in bookies and wagering on sporting events, video gambling machines and gaming houses." That is what your report says. That's what's in the briefing note. How can you possibly move forward with the introduction of 20,000 slot machines? How can you ignore the reports that are warning you of the infiltration of organized crime into the province? You're the top cop of this province. Is it your belief that as long as the government gets its take from gambling you will be prepared to look the other way on organized crime? That's what you're doing.

Hon Mr Runciman: That's really not worthy of a response. Essentially, the policing community has indicated to us, as it indicated to the previous government, that going into this area would perhaps, based on some other jurisdictions, open opportunities for organized crime. The previous government indicated that it was undertaking initiatives to ensure that didn't occur. We have indicated to the policing community as well that we are going to devote the necessary resources to ensure that this doesn't happen. Plus, unlike the previous government, we are also going to devote the resources to go after all of the illegal machines in this province, esti-

mated to be about 25,000 illegal machines operating in the province under the two previous governments, and we are going to take action against them.

Mr Cordiano: One questions the competence of this minister after an answer like that. The report, which I have right in front of me, clearly indicates there is a danger of organized crime infiltrating legalized gambling.

The Windsor Star reports that you ordered the OPP commissioner "to carry out an investigation to get to the bottom of the breach of confidentiality." You're more interested in damage control than in fighting organized crime. That's what you've said today. Will the minister now come clean and admit that you made a mistake in deceiving this House, admit that the report you've had since the spring —

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): That's unparliamentary.

Mr Cordiano: That's what the minister has done.

The Speaker: Accusing the —

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): But he did. That's exactly what —

The Speaker: Please, the member for Oriole. You cannot accuse a minister of deceiving the House. I ask the member to withdraw.

1410

Mr Cordiano: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, and I will say that the minister has contradicted himself, at the very least. Admit that you had the report this spring —

The Speaker: Come up with a question, please.

Mr Cordiano: — and that you made a mistake in keeping it from this House. Minister, will you come to your senses and withdraw your video slot machine bill?

Hon Mr Runciman: I've indicated that I did not have the report. This is an internal policing document. I don't know how many times I have to say that.

With respect to the other allegation the member made, that I ordered some police investigation, that's a complete fabrication, a complete, utter fabrication. I did in no way order a police investigation. As I understand it, Chief Fantino, and I believe quite rightfully, has indicated his concerns about an internal operational intelligence document within the policing community being leaked to the media, and he has asked the OPP to investigate how that occurred. That's quite justifiable. But to suggest that I have somehow interfered is a complete and utter fabrication.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is also for the Solicitor General and minister of corrections and, surprise, surprise, Speaker, I too have a briefing note. It seems that the opposition is now able to get their hands on briefing notes but the minister denies that they either exist or that they're important.

I want to ask the minister this. This briefing note was prepared on March 15. It was obviously prepared in response to an article that appeared in the London Free Press the day before. The March 14, 1996, London Free Press quoted from the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario document stating, and this is what the report states: "Until the government provides meaningful enforcement, legal gaming will continue under a façade of

honesty and integrity. There seems to be an acceptance that gambling is not a problem."

The Speaker: The question, please.

Mr Hampton: You said you didn't read this report, despite the fact that this briefing note was in your hands. So when these issues are raised even in the briefing note —

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Hampton: — did you not read the report? Did you not ask for the report because you didn't think it's important, because you don't think this issue matters? Why didn't you ask for the report?

The Speaker: The question's been asked.

Hon Mr Runciman: No. The opposition can't have it both ways. I've said this on a number of occasions. They want to criticize me, they want to criticize the government, if there's any perception of interference in operational matters. I've just been accused here today of directing the OPP to conduct an investigation, which is a complete falsehood. Now they're saying, "Why don't you get your fingers into the pie?"

The Speaker: Order. I ask the Solicitor General to withdraw that, accusing them of falsehoods. That again is out of order.

Hon Mr Runciman: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. The point I'm trying to make is that this is clearly an operational matter and I am not and no Solicitor General in the past, I've been advised, has ever requested or gained access to these confidential intelligence reports provided through the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario. These are not government reports. There was a news report. We asked for a summary of the concerns. They were provided to the government and provided to the Premier's office. That is the end of it.

Mr Hampton: This is incredible. The briefing note raises a number of issues. The briefing note itself says, "The purpose of the report is to identify the areas within the gaming industry that are susceptible to abuse by organized crime." Then it lists some of them, and it lists video gambling machines, something the government of the day is considering. This minister, the Solicitor General, says, "Well, I'm not going to look at it." He says it would be improper.

Duncan Brown, the executive director of the Gaming Control Commission, took it upon himself to request a copy of the report and was in fact allowed to read it. And get this. This is Duncan Brown. This person is acting responsibly. He says he needed to know the contents of the report in order to respond to questions and concerns. He was going to be responsible.

Minister, how do you explain this? The report is available to the executive director of the gaming commission. He cares about this issue. He cares about the infiltration of organized crime into video lottery terminals. He read the report, he had access to it, and you want to say, "Oh, I can't read this report." How do you explain that?

Hon Mr Runciman: It's always dangerous to make assumptions, but I would assume that the director of the gaming commission would have law officer, peace officer status so that it is appropriate, I would think, given the mandate of the gaming commission, to have access to this kind of document. It would seem to me that that would be most appropriate. It is totally inappropriate —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Solicitor General.

Hon Mr Runciman: I think it's quite appropriate that that individual would have access to that kind of information, but totally inappropriate for a politician and member of government.

I'll once again say it. Chief Julian Fantino, who's the head of Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario, says this was an internal document, a confidential document, never intended to be released to the government.

Mrs Caplan: You're the minister. You're responsible.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Oriole, come to order.

Hon Mr Runciman: That's the head of the Criminal Intelligence Service saying it was a document never intended to be released to government.

Mr Hampton: The Solicitor General wants to confuse the public and hopes that by doing that, he can slide by.

What was under consideration by the government was a policy decision, a policy decision whether or not to proceed with video slot machines, not a decision about whether to prosecute, not a decision about whether or not to investigate an individual. It would have been perfectly acceptable for this minister to ask for names and dates to be excluded from the report, to receive that report for the purposes of the policy consideration, to then take that and provide advice to his other cabinet colleagues. This minister has been derelict in his duties. That is the long and the short of it.

But let me ask the final question. Solicitor General, since the briefing note itself raises serious issues, did you notify your cabinet colleagues of the affiliation of organized crime and gambling in Ontario and did you caution them on the introduction of video slot machines to Ontario? Did you do that?

Hon Mr Runciman: I suppose I could ask the member when he commissioned a report if he put it into his —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): No, we rejected VLTs.

Hon Mr Runciman: No, that was talking about casino gambling, if memory —

The Speaker: The member for Algoma, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: I have the opportunity to meet with Chief Fantino on a fairly regular basis to talk about policing concerns across the province and certainly the chief has indicated to me on a number of occasions that his concern primarily is that we devote adequate resources to deal with this, not only the challenges with respect to legalization of VLTs but that we can focus as well on all of the illegal machines that have been operating in this province for some time, which that government refused to take action against, did not do anything about. We are going to do something about it.

The Treasurer has indicated that once we move on the VLT question and the legislation is passed, we are going to devote additional resources to this area so that we can deal with it in a meaningful way.

The Speaker: New question, third party.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Well, Speaker —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Your question is to?

Mr Hampton: Actually my question is to the Minister of Health. We'll see if we can get some answers from him.

Minister, today, October 10, the Ontario Medical Association has released a press notice whose headline is, "Government Underfunding Threatens to Further Reduce Access to Quality Medical Care for Patients." In this release they say, "Ontario's 10,000 general practitioners and family doctors say they are being compelled to further adjust their practices in response to continued government underfunding of medical services. The doctors say they may be forced to stop accepting new, non-emergency patients on November 1, 1996." The doctors are very specific. They say that your underfunding of health care is stopping them from accepting new non-emergency patients.

1420

Minister, what do you have to say in response to all those family physicians out there who are providing health care to Ontario citizens?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health): The honourable member is well aware that the Ontario Medical Association and the Ministry of Health are having negotiations at this time, with an eye to resolving some of the frustrations that doctors have in this province. Those frustrations go back 10 to 15 years and I would remind the honourable member that this government is not cutting health care; Ottawa is cutting health care by \$2.1 billion over the next two years.

Mr Hampton: This is the Minister of Health for Ontario, and it's always been the case in Ontario that the Minister of Health took responsibility for the health care system. I didn't know suddenly that that had now passed to Ottawa. I don't think the doctors accept that, so let me try again. The doctors are saying, "While doctors are seeing a big increase in the number of patients, many of whom are older and require extra care, the government has frozen its funding for patient care at a level that's less than was spent four years ago." To me, that sounds like a cut.

I want to ask the minister again, what is your response to those 10,000 family physicians who provide important health care to the citizens of Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member is terribly misinformed. The \$3.8-billion cap on the fee-for-service component, we spend more than that on doctors in this province, and physician services; that's just the fee-for-service doctors in the province. That cap was put in place by law up till March 31 this year by the previous government, as a holdover from the social contract. Since that time, this government has acknowledged that yes, the population is getting older and it's growing, and we're negotiating with the doctors' association right now to address all of the issues, including the \$3.8-billion issue, which is a figure that was imposed on the doctors by the previous government.

Mr Hampton: The social contract containment expired on March 31. We too have met with the OMA and the OMA is very clear that this minister has created the crisis; they're very clear that this minister has pressed

down the cap more than ever before; they're very clear that this minister, through his irrational measures and unrealistic measures in Bill 26 in terms of funding medical services, in terms of refusing to recognize growing populations, in terms of his refusal to recognize an aging population, is the source of the problem.

Minister, this is what the doctors say, what the OMA says. They say, "We recommend that as of November 1, 1996, Ontario's family doctors stop seeing new non-emergency patients as a further adjustment to the government's underfunding of health care."

The Speaker: Question.

Mr Hampton: They're very clear. So I want to ask you again, what is your answer to those family physicians, who provide health care for the citizens of Ontario? What are you going to do to address their concerns about a growing population and about a population that is growing older and therefore uses more health care services? What is your response?

Hon Mr Wilson: This government has invested significantly in doctors' services since coming to office. We brought in the \$70-an-hour on-call emergency fee which is keeping 70 emergency rooms open, and that's direct dollars to doctors to allow them to work in emergency during the low-volume times of the day and night. We've introduced direct contracts for 21 communities, with significant salaries and benefits. We've converted a number of doctors in the province from fee for service to an APP, an alternative payment plan. We've invested in cardiac services and dialysis, reducing waiting lists. Doctors say, "I don't benefit directly from those investments." They do, because it reduces utilization. People aren't using hospital beds unnecessarily when they can get into dialysis right away, when they can have their heart surgeries as quickly as possible. That cuts down utilization, that helps doctors and that helps with pressures on the \$3.8 billion fee-for-service pool.

This government's record is better than any government's in the last 10 years. We're paying the doctors' malpractice insurance, and we've had Justice Dubin, along with the federal government and the malpractice insurance association, doing an investigation on that. So we've made significant headway on doctors' issues and we intend to make more headway through the negotiating process.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I would like to return to the Solicitor General. What we know today is that in March of this year you were informed through this briefing note of this criminal intelligence report. That should have alerted you, by reading this, that there is grave danger in this province with the proliferation of gambling activities. This was occurring at the same time a bill was being developed by your government that was introduced in June of this year — so simultaneously this was being developed; you knew about that — that would start to expand VLTs right across this province in uncontrolled environments.

Minister, why would you not, upon reading this, have had alarm bells go off in your mind and said: "Hey, we

might have a problem here. I'd like to see this report and just see how bad a problem it is and what I maybe need to do about it if we're going to do this VLT thing." Why weren't you on the job and doing your job and asking for this report so that you could bring proper law enforcement to gambling in this province?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I indicated earlier in response to a question of the same nature that it would have been an unprecedented request by a Solicitor General to request a personal review of an intelligence report developed for the policing community, unprecedented and perceived as interference in operational policing matters. I indicated —

Interjections.

Hon Mr Runciman: They simply do not want to hear this answer, Mr Speaker. But I do meet with Chief Fantino and we speak on the phone on a number of occasions. If he felt that I did not have adequate information or that the government did not have adequate information with respect to this, he would have advised me. His indication has been all along —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: — urging the government to ensure that adequate resources go into policing this and dealing with illegal gambling in a more effective manner than has been the case in the past. We have given him those assurances; I have, as has the Treasurer.

Mr Ramsay: Minister, you're about the only person in this province who doesn't care to read this report. We're all very concerned about this. I always thought that when you are in government and you're there to design public policy, you want to gather all the pertinent information to make sure that it's good public policy, that it's beneficial to the people of the province.

You knew there were some concerns about this and you decided to ignore it, just like you ignored the alleged beatings of young offenders. Every time there's been a problem in your ministry, it's either you didn't care to know, you didn't want to know, you just didn't know. You're not doing your job. It's not interfering to design good public policy, to take all the very best information you have so that when you bring forward public policy, it's for the benefit of everybody here.

Minister, you just don't get it. Introducing VLTs into restaurants and bars is the first time we've had a major proliferation of gambling machines outside a controlled environment.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Ramsay: They're controlled in the casinos, they're controlled in racetracks — it's coming in — but they're not going to be controlled any longer. Why don't you put the police resources in place to do a proper job, to make sure that gambling doesn't get into the wrong hands of people here in Ontario?

Hon Mr Runciman: We intend to do that and we've made those commitments. I can recite chapter and verse —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Runciman: — whether it deals with young offenders, whether it deals with ordering the OPP to con-

duct investigations, whether we're accused of ordering the OPP into all sorts of things, political interference, which they raise on a very regular basis, making those kinds of accusations, that this minister and this government are directing police services across this province, which is totally false and I've indicated that on numerous occasions. Now, again, they're encouraging me, they're encouraging this government to get involved in operational matters, confidential reports within the policing community, and saying: "You should be getting into this. You should be interfering in operational matters of policing." Well, folks, you're not going to have it both ways. I am not going to get involved in operational matters of policing. This Solicitor General will not do it. I'm telling you that and that's the way it's going to stand.

1430

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is again for the Solicitor General. I want to quote from the briefing note which was prepared March 15, 1996, because it actually provides a summary of the Criminal Intelligence Service report. This is what the summary says. It says, "Analysis shows that illegal gambling flourishes in Ontario," and it also says, "Legalized gambling has never replaced illegal gambling, which has increased with interest shown in video gambling machines and gaming houses."

Solicitor General, when you saw that, didn't it jump out at you that your government strategy about bringing in VLTs might not work, that in fact legal gambling might not do anything to replace illegal gambling with VLTs? Did that not rise to your mind when you saw that in this briefing note?

Hon Mr Runciman: I've talked to police officers across the province with respect to VLTs, and they do have concerns. They are related to ensuring that adequate resources go into dealing with it.

With respect to the suggestion the leader of the third party is making that this will encourage a further proliferation of illegal gambling, there is a difference of opinion within the policing community on that issue as well. I indicated yesterday that a former deputy commissioner of the OPP has quite the opposite view with respect to this matter and indicates that this will in fact allow the government to have a real impact on removing illegal machines from the province of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: Once again the Solicitor General is trying to confuse the issue. The Solicitor General is a member of cabinet. He is supposed to take part in cabinet policy discussions about whether video slot machines would be good for Ontario or bad for Ontario. He has a report in front of him that says legalizing video slot machines will not work.

Further, he has a report, and this is what the briefing note says: "The two major gambling activities of sport bookmaking and video gambling machines annually earn an estimated \$1 billion and \$500 million respectively for the criminal elements."

When you saw those two things, Minister, the one point that video slot machines earn organized crime \$500 million a year —

The Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Hampton: — and the other part of the briefing note saying if you introduce legal slot machines, the problem is simply going to multiply, did the thought cross your head to maybe talk to the Premier or to maybe talk to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations —

The Speaker: Put the question, please.

Mr Hampton: — and say to them, "Hey, we've got a problem here"? The thought occurred to the executive director of the gaming commission. He took it seriously. Did you?

Hon Mr Runciman: I indeed take the question of illegal gambling in this province very seriously. If we're losing in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion to organized crime and to illegal activities, certainly we want to cope with that in an effective way. To suggest that legalizing VLTs is not going to help us in that sense —

Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside): That's what it says in your own briefing notes.

Hon Mr Runciman: No, they don't say that. They do not say that in the sense that if we can devote additional resources, we're going to be able to do that. You get differing opinions as you talk to law enforcement officers in this area, but the one thing they do agree on is that we can focus additional resources so we can deal in a very effective way with illegal gambling operations in this province. That's what we intend to do. To put on blinkers, as has been in the case in the past — they're trying to suggest that all of a sudden this is something new.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Answer the question.

Hon Mr Runciman: Illegal gambling revenues have been out there and we are going to come to grips with that. We are going to deal with it in an effective way.

The Speaker: New question, the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is for the Solicitor General. You had a report come to your government, a report that was out there from a very reputable and knowledgeable organization, the experts in the field, in other words, which expressed the greatest of concerns about gambling in the province of Ontario and the criminal element that would be permeating that gambling activity.

When your government was deciding whether or not to go into the dark, murky waters of video lottery terminals in every bar and every restaurant in Ontario, did you not believe that you had an obligation to inform your colleagues in the cabinet of these genuine and great concerns by this organization, by this police report, before you made a decision to embark upon placing video lottery terminals in bars and in restaurants in every neighbourhood in Ontario?

Hon Mr Runciman: I think these concerns were raised related to the introduction of casino gambling in the province of Ontario and initiatives were undertaken by the previous government to ensure that they were dealt with appropriately.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Oriole, come to order.

Hon Mr Runciman: That's this government's intention with respect to the introduction of VLTs across this province. It's not being done in isolation. We are going to ensure that adequate resources are put in place so that this whole area is policed in a much more effective way and that we're going to deal with illegal gambling in a much more effective way than has been the case in the past. We recognize the concerns and we are addressing them.

Mr Bradley: There isn't anybody in this province who's going to believe that the Solicitor General would not have the responsibility to inform his cabinet colleagues before embarking upon a major policy change, something that was totally contradictory to what the Treasurer of this province and the Premier of this province let people in this Ontario of ours know would be their stand on a major issue — that is, putting electronic slot machines in bars and restaurants.

Do you not believe that you had a responsibility to share that information, to apprise yourself of the report? Not necessarily direct them to do anything; to apprise yourself of the problem and inform your colleagues. If you didn't, wouldn't you believe that people in this province could conclude that the only reason you're embarking upon 20,000 video lottery terminals, electronic slot machines, is to make up for the tax cut loss? In other words, you're so greedy for this money, so desperate for this money, that you're ignoring criminal activity in this field.

Hon Mr Runciman: I've indicated on a number of occasions now that we have responded to the concerns of the policing community with respect to organized crime and legalized gambling, whether it's through casinos or through the introduction of VLTs in this province. We've indicated very clearly to the policing community as well that we are going to devote the required resources to deal with this in a most effective way. So I think we are addressing those concerns in a most responsible manner.

Mr Hampton: Another question for the Solicitor General and just a point that the Solicitor General wants to avoid. The fact is that other governments in this province have been faced with the issue of video slot machines, and other governments in this province — and I was a member of one — sat down and looked at the information and said, no, video slot machines are something we should not proceed with. We should not proceed with them for social reasons and we should not proceed with them because there is the issue of organized crime and the involvement of organized crime in slot machines.

So I want to ask you, because you seem to want to avoid this issue — this isn't a policing issue; this is an issue that you are a member of cabinet. You should be bringing to cabinet relevant information on the issue of video slot machines. You had information in your possession which showed that there was substantial organized crime involvement with video slot machines and information which indicated that the problem would not go away, the problem would get worse if the government brought in more video slot machines.

Did you pass that information on to your cabinet colleagues for discussion? Did you put it to your cabinet

colleagues so they could have an informed discussion about this issue? Yes or no.

Hon Mr Runciman: I find it interesting that the member opposite went through this himself with respect to his time in government. He commissioned a report as a backbencher, if I recall, dealing with casino gambling, and it expressed concerns about organized crime infiltration into casino gambling. What happened? Obviously he was convinced within his cabinet circle and within his own government that if we devote adequate and appropriate policing resources, casino gambling will not be a problem; we can control the situation and ensure that organized crime does not infiltrate. What did he do? He supported casino gambling coming into this province.

Now he's saying we can't do the same thing. We take a close look at VLTs, we recognize the policing concerns and we are addressing them in a responsible and appropriate way.

Mr Hampton: I asked the minister a simple question. He was alerted to the information in this briefing note. I asked him if he passed on this information to his cabinet colleagues, like the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, like the Premier, like the Deputy Premier, so they could make an informed decision. I ask him that question again: Did you take this information on the involvement of organized crime in video slot machines and pass it on to your cabinet colleagues so that your government could have an informed discussion about the introduction of more video slot machines into Ontario? Did you do that?

Hon Mr Runciman: I think my colleagues in government are very much apprised of concerns with respect to VLTs. We are addressing those, we're going through this process with respect to the legislation in the House through committee public hearings, and I've certainly conveyed the concerns of the policing community to the Treasurer and other colleagues with respect to ensuring that we have adequate resources into policing to ensure that we can appropriately deal with those concerns. I can say no more. I believe we are dealing with this in an effective and very responsible way.

1440

WORKFARE

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. In a news release yesterday the member for Hamilton East accused you of violating the program guidelines for Ontario Works. He claims that the first seven Ontario Works participants in Algoma are displacing municipal workers. I'd like you to respond to that allegation, please.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'd like to thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for giving me the opportunity to correct the public record, which was so unfortunately clouded earlier this week by the member for Hamilton East. I expect we can expect more of the same, as our critics opposite continue to demonstrate their opposition to workfare in Ontario.

We have confirmed with the Algoma social services board, and they have indicated to us that these individuals

are not replacing paid workers in their community. Secondly, I think it's important to note that this community went out of their way to consult with local union officials in the area to make sure there was agreement with and support for the opportunities they are giving welfare recipients to get back on their feet and back into the workforce.

Mr Pettit: Could you please give the Legislature and the people of Ontario an update as to what progress is being made with the Ontario Works program?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I would certainly like to. Thank you very much. We have recently signed business plans with seven more communities in Peel, Algoma, Kent, Muskoka, Nipissing, North Bay and Brockville, so we are moving ahead with workfare. I had the privilege of speaking to representatives from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario the other day. Many more communities were prepared and asking to be included in the second phase. I look forward to working with them. We're proceeding slowly and surely on workfare. If mistakes are made we'll remedy them, if there are problems which develop we're going to fix them as we slowly and surely move ahead with workfare in Ontario, a program that my honourable colleague from Hamilton East campaigned on and supported during the election.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): To the Solicitor General: From the very first day at the committee on administration of justice when I asked that the committee request a report entitled *Gambling in Ontario: Current Enforcement Concerns, 1995*, at that time, when it wasn't available, and since then, it would seem you have almost thwarted an attempt to get a full picture of what might happen if video lottery slot machines are introduced to the province of Ontario.

I simply need an answer on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario. There is a briefing note based on that report that went to your ministry. "Minister Tsubouchi and I," previously Minister Sterling, "are trying to do what's best when it comes to Bill 75."

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question, please.

Mr Crozier: Have you shared this briefing note with any other minister?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I believe the appropriate ministers were aware at the time with respect to the press report. Beyond that, I don't believe any minister that I'm aware of would request access to this report. It's not a government report, as I indicated. It's a confidential intelligence document within the policing community and it would have been totally inappropriate for any member or minister of the crown to request it.

Mr Crozier: I'm talking about at least the briefing note. Let's forget the report itself, although I think that you, as the top police officer in this province, should at least have read the report.

Will you at least at this point — and third reading on Bill 75 has now been delayed a week — delay the debate on Bill 75, with the cooperation of the Minister of

Consumer and Commercial Relations, until the committee on administration of justice has been briefed by a police officer or someone from the OPP or the gambling division on the concerns they have with video slot machine introduction across this province?

Hon Mr Runciman: I don't have carriage of the legislation. I hope the minister was listening. I'll refer this.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): What I will say is that clearly we recognize there is a problem with respect to the roving casinos, which were introduced, quite frankly, under the Peterson government.

Mr Crozier: These are VLTs. Get it straight.

The Speaker: The member for Essex South.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The charities have told us that there is a problem with the regulation of these initiatives. That's why we are moving towards permanent charity gaming halls. Under Bill 75, we will be bringing in better regulatory features, better ways to control, better ways to monitor and to make sure the charities do benefit out of these initiatives.

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Minister, this issue has been around now since March of this year and it has certainly been in the news for the last couple of days, so let me ask you, have you had an occasion to read this briefing note on illegal gambling? Either in your former capacity as a minister of the crown or now in your present capacity as a minister of the crown, have you had an opportunity to read this briefing note dealing with illegal gambling and its infiltration of video lottery machines?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: What I can understand from what the leader of the third party is saying, certainly I've heard from them, both from them and also from members of the opposition, of what he is speaking.

I will refer once again to the *Globe and Mail* article that really initiated this. What this says is, "Most of these problems could be dealt with if the provincial government would devote resources to supervision," and that's exactly what the government is intending to do.

With respect to the actual report, certainly that has been answered adequately by the Solicitor General many times.

1450

Mr Hampton: Neither the Solicitor General nor the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations has adequately answered; that's the whole problem here. You keep flashing around the article from the *Globe and Mail* as if to say, "Well, that's where I get my information." Here's what is interesting: Duncan Brown, who works for you, works at the Gaming Control Commission. The Gaming Control Commission is on page 192 in the government phone book. It's under the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. So Duncan Brown essentially reports to you. Duncan Brown, when he saw this information, called up the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario and asked to see the report. They gave him a copy of the report to read. Have you called up and

asked to read the report, since somebody who works for you and is responsible to you has had access to the report? Have you done your job and talked to Duncan Brown?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I have to really frame it in the same manner as the Solicitor General: This report is not something which is supposed to be accessible to the political arm of this government. It was a police report. It would be very inappropriate for me to actually have that report.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Southern Ontario has the worst smog problem in Canada. Reports have suggested that many Ontario communities suffer from poor air quality and some indicate that up to 1,800 deaths per year occur because of this health hazard. Could you please tell this House what initiatives you will be taking to ensure that my constituents and all the citizens of Ontario breathe cleaner air?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy): I'm proud to say that our government is taking some very important steps with regard to smog and air quality in this province. Last January we established what we call a smog team to put together a plan of action. In June we put forward that plan of action and called it Toward a Smog Plan for Ontario.

Now we are considering the implementation —
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Would the member from Ottawa come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I say to the members of the third party that you're running your time off the clock.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Thank you.

The Speaker: I say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Sterling: Perhaps I should start over again. We're very proud of what we're doing with regard to air quality in the province of Ontario. As I mentioned previously, we put together a team early in this year and then brought forward a plan in June to deal with the smog situation we have in the province of Ontario.

We are considering at this time the implementation of mandatory vehicle emission testing. I have also put forward a plan to meet with many of my counterparts in the bordering states in the United States to deal with the huge number of air emissions which come from that particular jurisdiction. I'm looking forward as well to bringing forward other measures to deal with air pollutants in our province.

Mr Carroll: I realize your business plan prioritizes the setting and enforcing of tough environmental standards. Are there any other specific measures you are currently considering to ensure that strong standards are being set to address the very serious issue of air quality?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Give me a break. Look at this report today. What are you talking about? Why don't you tell the truth for once?

The Speaker: Order. The member for Riverdale, I would ask that you withdraw that, please. I would ask that you withdraw, "Why don't you tell the truth for once?"

Ms Churley: Thank you for pointing that out. I didn't realize that I had put it in those terms and I withdraw those comments.

Hon Mr Sterling: I'm committed towards ensuring that we have updated standards with regard to air quality. Today, we will be putting forward the most aggressive plan to deal with updating standards in this province, which haven't been dealt with for a period of 20 years. We're behind 20 years in setting updated standards with regard to air pollutants.

Our plan will put forward what we will be doing over the next three years. We will be dealing with all of the important chemicals which are airborne and we will be looking at the standards which we have at the present time and updating them, and hopefully of course reducing the amount of emissions in the province of Ontario.

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): My question is to the Solicitor General. I want to this afternoon ask the Solicitor General to help me understand his position and the position of the Harris cabinet with respect to police concerns articulated well before the Harris government embarked upon a very substantial expansion into the world and the business of electronic slot machines.

Minister, is it your argument and are you asking this Parliament to believe that weeks after your department prepared, in March 1996, a briefing note that makes plain that police officials in Ontario are concerned about the level of mob involvement in electronic slot machines, then illegal but that are about to be made legal, that you never took those concerns to this cabinet governing the province before the decision was announced in the spring budget that Ontario was going to move headlong into the world of electronic slot machines, often described as the crack cocaine of the gambling world?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): I've indicated that my cabinet colleagues and members of the government are well aware that there are and have been some concerns with respect to legal gambling being instituted in the province of Ontario. They certainly go back to the NDP government's decision to bring casino gambling into Ontario. The question always surrounding this was that we ensure that adequate police resources be devoted to ensure that organized crime not be allowed to gain a foothold in the legal side of gambling operations in this province. Also, of course, they've expressed concern about the enormous growth of illegal gambling in Ontario —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer, please.

Hon Mr Runciman: — primarily through the infiltration of VLTs from another province, which shall remain nameless, but also gambling in betting and gaming houses. So we're also committed to going after those areas of illegal operations in this province as well.

I think if you just look at what the Liberal government —

The Speaker: The question's been answered. Supplementary.

Mr Conway: Your own departmental briefing note, prepared presumably for you in March 1996, makes plain that one of the fundamental rationales which your government was to advance a few weeks later for legalizing electronic slot machines, namely, that it would eliminate the illegal world, your own briefing note of March 18, 1996, makes plain is not going to happen.

Now, Minister, you stand here and ask us to believe that you didn't, the Premier didn't, the Treasurer didn't, the justice minister, nobody saw the police report to which this departmental briefing note of March 18, 1996, makes reference. Nobody saw it and few, if anybody, heard about it and its recommendations that are central to the policy of legalizing this crack cocaine business of electronic slot machines.

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Conway: For this honourable House to accept that from a responsible minister of the crown —

The Speaker: Question, please.

Mr Conway: — is for us to believe that you are either a dupe or a dope, or some peculiar combination of both, who failed —

The Speaker: Order. Member for Renfrew North, I don't find that parliamentary, decorous or in order. I ask —

Mr Conway: I'll withdraw it if you believe it to be unparliamentary, but let me rephrase the final observation. How is any self-respecting Parliament supposed to accept from a responsible minister that something that is so important as the contents of this ministerial briefing note to a policy that you're about to announce, about mob influence in both illegal and about-to-be-legalized electronic slot machines, was never brought by the responsible minister to the cabinet table? How is that not a gross dereliction of your public duty?

Hon Mr Runciman: I think I've responded adequately up to this point.

1500

WITHDRAWAL OF NOTICE

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With regard to standing order 34(a), yesterday I was not satisfied with the answer of the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Since that time, we have spoken. We now, I think, if he will concur, agree there was a bit of a misunderstanding as to where my position stood, and I'm willing to withdraw my request for a late show.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I get the sense you'll probably get concurrence. Withdrawn.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training): I have the weekly business statement.

Pursuant to standing order 55, I wish to indicate the business of the House for the week of October 14, 1996.

On Monday, October 14, the House will not sit due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

On Tuesday, October 15, we will resume second reading of Bill 81, the Fewer Politicians Act.

Wednesday, October 16, will be an opposition day standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition.

Orders of the day for Thursday, October 17, are to be determined.

PETITIONS

QUEEN STREET MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I keep getting petitions against the jail in our community in the west end of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Then I suggest you read it.

Mr Ruprecht: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the PC government has opened a 20-bed forensic facility for the criminally insane at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre; and

"Whereas the nearby community is already home to the highest number of ex-psychiatric patients and social service organizations and hundreds of licensed and unlicensed rooming-houses, group homes and crisis care facilities in all of Canada; and

"Whereas there are existing facilities that could be expanded to assess and treat the criminally insane; and

"Whereas no one was consulted, not the local residents, not the business community, not the leaders of community organizations, not education and child care providers and not even the local member of provincial Parliament;

"Therefore we, the undersigned residents and business owners of our community, urge the PC government of Ontario and the Minister of Health to immediately stop all plans to accommodate the criminally insane in an expanded Queen Street Mental Health Centre for these purposes until a public consultation process is completed."

I've attached my signature to this document.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have thousands of petitions signed by workers at the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant sent to me by their health and safety representative, Paul Goggan. The petition reads as follows:

"To ensure enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act at the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned CAW Local 222 members working in the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant, are opposed to the lack of enforcement by the Ministry of Labour against General Motors, who is prohibited by law from taking reprisals, disciplining, threatening, intimidating or penalizing against any worker

who has acted in compliance with or has sought enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or regulations;

"We, the undersigned, therefore demand enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and direct involvement of Labour Minister Elizabeth Witmer to ensure enforcement of health and safety legislation for the protection of the workers in the General Motors Oshawa car assembly plant."

I sign my name with theirs in support.

SALE OF AMMUNITION

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I present a petition signed by people concerned about ammunition regulations.

"Whereas the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae passed legislation, Bill 181, the Ammunition Regulation Act, placing restrictions on the sale of ammunition in Ontario; and

"Whereas the provisions contained in Bill 181 are time-consuming, onerous and create unnecessary red tape; and

"Whereas the records for which these provisions have been produced do not track criminals; and

"Whereas Bill 181 was passed, without any discussion with law-abiding gun owners such as farmers, collectors, hunters and recreational shooters, who understand and have a deep respect for the power of firearms and ammunition and the need to maintain and use their equipment in the safest of conditions; and

"Whereas Bill 181 will do nothing to combat the use of illegal ammunition;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal Bill 181, protect the rights of responsible firearms owners and work for tougher penalties against weapons offences."

In support of this petition I affix my signature upon it.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have yet another petition from residents in my area in which they are continuing to show concern with respect to the possibility of eliminating rent controls. I'll read it to the House.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has announced its intentions to remove rent control from apartments that become vacant so that landlords can charge whatever rent they want; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will eliminate rent control on new buildings, and allow landlords to pass on repair bills and other costs to tenants; and

"Whereas the government's proposal will make it easier for landlords to demolish buildings and easier to convert apartments to condominiums; and

"Whereas due to the zero vacancy rate in Metro Toronto the removal of rent control will cause extreme hardship for seniors and tenants on fixed incomes and others who cannot afford homes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent control system."

I agree with the contents of the petition and I affix my signature to it.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition signed by 30 residents of the riding of Sudbury East, which reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario is planning to destroy the present system of rent control; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative Party made no mention of scrapping rent control during the election campaign of 1995 nor in the Common Sense Revolution document; and

"Whereas a number of Conservative candidates in ridings with high tenant populations campaigned during the 1995 election on a platform of protecting the current rent control system; and

"Whereas the government has consulted with special interest groups representing landlords and developers while cutting funding to organizations representing the 3.5 million tenants of Ontario; and

"Whereas although all renters will suffer, seniors and others on fixed income will suffer particular hardship if rent controls are abolished; and

"Whereas eliminating rent control will result in skyrocketing rents in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the attack on the 3.5 million tenants of this province."

I've affixed my signature to it and I agree with the petitioners.

BEAR HUNTING

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The member for Mississauga South.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): This is the first opportunity I've had to congratulate you formally on the record on your successful election as Speaker a week ago today. I wish you health and success in your new vocation.

I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents to end the spring bear hunt.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

I am happy to lend support and sign this petition.

1510

NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch Hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who, in numerous cases, require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): The petitions in opposition to this government's attack on occupational health and safety and WCB continue to roll in. Today I have petitions from the Can Workers Local 354 in Dundas, International Union of Operating Engineers in Toronto, workers at Air Transat, and the glaziers' Local 1819 here in Toronto.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre, and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I and my caucus colleagues continue to support these petitions.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): I have a petition to end the spring bear hunt.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphan cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): A petition to the government of Ontario:

"Since video lottery terminals will contribute to gambling addiction in Ontario and the resulting breakup of families, spousal and child abuse and crime such as embezzlement and robbery; and

"Since the introduction of video lottery terminals across Ontario will provide those addicted to gambling with widespread temptation and will attract young people to a vice which will adversely affect their lives for many years to come; and

"Since the introduction of these gambling machines across our province is designed to gain revenue for the government at the expense of the poor, the vulnerable, the desperate, in order that the government can cut income taxes, to the greatest benefit of those with the highest incomes; and

"Since the placement of video lottery terminals in bars in Ontario and permanent casinos in various locations across the province represents an escalation of gambling opportunities; and

"Since Premier Harris and Finance Minister Eves were so critical of the provincial government becoming involved in further gambling ventures and making the government more dependent on gambling revenues to maintain government operations;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to reconsider its announced decision to introduce the most insidious form of gambling, video lottery terminals, to restaurants and bars in the province."

RENT REGULATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have the following petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario is planning to destroy the present system of rent control; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Conservative Party made no mention of scrapping rent control during the election campaign of 1995 or in the Common Sense Revolution document; and

"Whereas a number of Conservative candidates in ridings with high tenant populations campaigned during the 1995 election on a platform of protecting the current rent control system; and

"Whereas the government has consulted with special interest groups representing landlords and developers while cutting funding to organizations representing the 3.5 million tenants of Ontario; and

"Whereas although all renters will suffer, seniors and others on fixed incomes will suffer particular hardship if rent controls are abolished; and

"Whereas eliminating rent control will result in skyrocketing rents in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the attack on the 3.5 million tenants of this province."

I add my signature in support.

ABORTION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's my privilege to present a petition to the House today.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, illness or injury;

"Whereas abortion is not therapeutic;

"Whereas abortion is never medically necessary;

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require elective procedures to be funded;

"Whereas there is no right to publicly funded abortion;

"Whereas it is the responsibility and authority of the provinces exclusively to determine what services will be insured;

"Whereas there's mounting evidence that abortion is hazardous to women's health;

"Whereas the availability of abortion at public expense leads to the use of abortion as a means of birth control;

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded 45,000 abortions in 1993, at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario provincial government remove abortion as a service or procedure covered under the provincial health insurance plan."

I'm pleased to affix my name to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FEWER POLITICIANS ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996

RÉDUISANT LE NOMBRE DE DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 81, An Act to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by making the number and boundaries of provincial electoral districts identical to those of their federal counterparts and to make consequential amendments to statutes concerning

electoral representation / *Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à réduire le nombre des députés à l'Assemblée législative en rendant identiques le nombre et les limites des circonscriptions électorales provinciales et fédérales et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à des lois concernant la représentation électorale.*

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate the opportunity to continue from where I left off yesterday and to say to the House and to those who are listening that if they really want an excellent exposé of why the way this government is approaching this particular piece of legislation or the way it is moving on changing the nature and the makeup of this place is wrong, all they have to do is pick up a copy of yesterday's Hansard and read the speech from the member for Renfrew North.

It was just an excellent presentation, very clear and concise, with all kinds of historical research, of supportive documentation to say to this government that there are other ways of restructuring this place to find cost savings, if that's what they're about, and still maintain the effectiveness, still be true to the traditions of this province and the way we've actually, as a country, tried to be fair in the methods we put in place to make sure that everybody is represented at these very important houses of government, the legislatures, provincially and federally. So I would suggest to anybody who is at all concerned or interested or thoughtful about this particular issue that they make an effort. They might even want to call the office of their member and ask for a copy of yesterday's Hansard and take a look at the speech from the member for Renfrew North.

1520

In my opening yesterday, I suggested that this legislation was in many ways an attack on democracy, an attack on the fundamentals of democracy, an attack also on politicians. Today I'm going to expand a little on that: just what it is that we accept and understand, and what those of us who participate in it know, as democracy today. At the end, I'm going to speak about how this very quick, unilateral, unconsultative approach to changing dramatically and drastically the makeup of this place, the number of people who sit and make decisions on behalf of everybody in the province, is not the right way to go.

I don't think anybody in this House would argue with the fact that from time to time as population changes, goes up or down or shifts with the economy, change needs to be made; that we need to be thoughtful and intelligent about that and need to be looking at new approaches to ensure that people's voices are heard; that we honour the fundamental principles of the democratic process we've inherited. We have the responsibility of making sure that stays intact and from time to time we need to make those changes. But the way this government is going about this, as with everything else it has done in the year and some few months it's been in charge at Queen's Park, is just not consistent with the way we've done it in the past.

It is, in very significant and interesting ways, a diminishing of democracy in the very way it is being implemented. I hear from my House leader that this government is so anxious to get this legislation in, this legislation that has such wide and far-ranging ramifications for

every citizen of the province, that they want to do it in a matter of less than a month and a half, before the House rises in this fall session, before Christmas of this year. This government wants this bill, as we've seen with so many other bills they've brought in in the past year or so, just whipped through this House with minimal consultation from the members who have been elected — never mind the public out there, who have come to expect and appreciate participation in fuller, wider and broader public consultation on these important issues.

This government, in its attempt to stifle, limit and diminish democracy in Ontario, is once again doing that. We're expected to pass this bill before the end of this session. They're giving us two or three days to debate it in the House. But every member of our caucus has a tremendous interest in participating in this discussion and wanting to be part of it, so we'll be pushing as hard as we can to make sure that everybody has a chance, the Liberal members, the New Democrat members and hopefully the members across the way. I know from speaking to many of them and sitting on committee with many of them that they have a concern and an interest in making sure that the views of their constituents, through them, are heard in this place and that they get a chance to air their views, to stand up and tell their story and make their case, as is their right, as is their due, because they are duly elected to this place and should expect and demand to be heard on these issues. I'm sure there are many of them over there who really feel strongly about this.

To be limited and shut out because we're in a big hurry with this is, in my mind, a real slap in the face of the democratic process. Why the hurry? Democracy, the way we do government in this province, has been evolving for more than 100 years now, and we have time, all kinds of time, to make sure that what we do is consistent with the traditions of this place and with the way we've always done things, to make sure that what we do is very careful and thoughtful and intelligent in the end.

I said yesterday that I found it passing strange that we New Democrats are the ones in this instance standing up and defending the integrity of this place, standing up and defending the traditions of this place.

Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand): One minute we're too fast, the next we're not doing enough.

Mr Martin: You folks across the way — Mr Preston is now engaged in this — as Conservatives are thought to be the defenders of stability and tradition and all that kind of thing. Why in this instance are you willing to throw all that out the window because you want to impose upon this province your agenda — which you have some right to do because you were duly elected — in such a big hurry? Why are you so willing to turn your back on the traditional way that we normally do things around here in this instance, which is going to have such a far-reaching and fundamental effect on the way people are represented, on their opportunity to have their voice heard and to participate in the politics of the province?

Mr Preston: What's the question? It won't happen for another four years.

Mr Martin: I don't know; I would hope that you would stand up in this debate, talk to your House leader

and ask him to make sure that we all have the necessary time to put our thoughts on the record. I would hope that you would go to your House leader and talk to him and say to him: "Listen, I've got some thoughts on this. I feel strongly about this. I have some interest in it. I genuinely and sincerely wanted to be an effective member of this place when I was elected. I wanted to represent my constituents, and in so doing I feel I have a right to participate."

You're not going to have the opportunity to speak at length on this if we follow the time lines that have been shared with our House leader re this piece of legislation. Even more troubling is the fact that they're not willing to go out for public consultation with it. What are you afraid of?

Mr Preston: We did it during the election. Read the book.

Mr Martin: No, you didn't go out on this at all. An election is a different process altogether from public consultation, from a standing committee of this House, with members of all parties participating, going around the province and hearing from people. It's a completely different process, and your lack of respect for it should cause people some concern and should cause them to sit up and say, if nothing else, "What is it they're trying to impose upon us that is so difficult and so troubling to them that they won't go out and listen to what people have to say about it?" The leader of our House tells us there may just be a willingness of this government to spend a day or two in Toronto — negotiations are going on about that — to hear from some people, but definitely not to go out to northern Ontario and not to go out to rural and urban Ontario and hear what —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): You didn't win any seats in the north.

Mr Martin: But that's consistent as well. In fact, built into the redistribution that we're debating here and the new configuration of ridings is a diminishing again of the ability of the voice of northern and southeastern and rural Ontario to be heard in this place. The fact that you're not willing to go out and hear from people shouldn't surprise us, actually, because it's consistent with your track record to date and with the way you're trying to ram this piece of legislation through the House.

Just think of Bill 26. Do you remember Bill 26? I'm sure many of you do because you got a lot of flak over it. As a matter of fact, when you moved so aggressively with that bully bill and we in this chamber had to participate in some level of civil disobedience, the people of this province rose up and were very angry. The polls that came out shortly after that particular piece of action showed that there was some disapproval of the way that you as a government were behaving yourselves in this place and of your lack of respect for the rights of the members of this House to participate fully in debates around issues you bring forward and the legislation you ultimately pass.

I suggest to you that in this instance the fact that you're not willing to take the necessary time to be thoughtful about this, to listen to the members in the House fully and to give them the time they need to put on the record their thoughts and the thoughts of their

constituents, and then not to be willing to go out to northern Ontario and not to be willing to go to south-eastern Ontario and to places like London and Windsor, where you might get another voice, another opinion on this particular issue, is alarming. It's alarming and it's disturbing.

1530

Any thinking person, any thoughtful person, any person out there who has a concern for democracy and the way we do democracy and the way this province is going to unfold and the decisions that are made here in this place that affect the lives of every constituent out there should see this as a red flag.

I know from having played a lot of high school sports that one of the principles we always ran by was that where you felt resistance, normally there was something happening, that where you felt a push of some sort coming at you, normally you knew there was action there, and so you focused on that. I would suggest to the people of Ontario, there is a big push here. There's a big push to get a piece of legislation through this House in a big hurry without consultation. You should be, if for no other reason, alarmed by that fact in itself and be writing in, be calling your members, be writing letters to the editor, be talking to each other, be willing to participate in petition campaigns that will probably develop out there and assist us here in this House to make sure this government respects the traditions of this place that have been put in place here over a number of years by people like ourselves, respected in their communities, who worked hard in their communities and at the end of the day got themselves elected by due process.

Today I want to elaborate a little further on some of what I laid out yesterday. This is a diminishing of democracy; this is a break with tradition. I suggested yesterday and will suggest again today that it's part of a bigger agenda to destroy representative democracy in this province. All you have to do is look around at the things that are being said and the proposals that are being made and the discussions that are being had around, for example, wiping out school boards.

We all may have some difficulty from time to time with the way the school boards operate or decisions they make or a million questions about whether they truly represent their constituents and all of that, but that's natural in a democracy where freedom is something that we cherish and the right to voice your opinion is something that we hold very near and dear. But to just walk in and under the guise of cost cutting and streamlining, without any thoughtful consultation and discussion, without any impact studies, without any plan to show us how this is going to work out and what you're going to replace it with, to just unilaterally wipe out school boards, which is what people out there are fearing — I've had discussions with the school trustees of my particular jurisdiction and I've read letters to the editor from trustees who are rightfully very concerned because they're not having any say. They, like us, are feeling quite under attack. They serve often at great sacrifice to themselves and their families.

Any of us who work in a place like Queen's Park or operate as trustees know that what you get by way of

remuneration, even though acceptable and nobody's complaining about it, doesn't always cover the hours that you put in doing research, going to meetings, and the times that you do those meetings at night, on weekends, when it's convenient for other people, and sometimes the lack of thanks you get for that. In this way, by this government, to be slapped with the back of the hand and told, "We no longer appreciate your services any more and in fact we are so concerned about other things that we're just going to dismiss you," that's part of what's going on here.

This piece of legislation is part of a larger agenda in this province to take away some of the rights that all of us who live in Ontario have come to expect by way of our citizenship will be there for us to participate democratically in the running of our schools, in the running of other government institutions and in the running of this place, and that's what's happening.

The amalgamation of municipalities: Again, in some instances that may make sense. But do it in consultation with them. Do it considering what they have to say, what we have to say, what others have to say about whether putting together one community with another does, at the end of the day, make sense.

I remember living in northern Ontario and talking with my colleague from Algoma, Bud Wildman, about the fact that so often a place like Wawa that is so intimately connected with Sault Ste Marie, does trade with Sault Ste Marie — as a matter of fact, when I was a teenager and had access to the family car, from time to time we'd jump into it on a Friday night and go to the Sault for coffee.

Mr Wildman: Did your father know that?

Mr Martin: Sometimes he did and sometimes he didn't. It depended on whether I had enough money to fill the gas tank up after, when I left it back. But we were —

Mr Wildman: You went 140 miles for coffee.

Mr Martin: Yes, for coffee. But we were connected to Sault Ste Marie, and yet when boundaries were drawn up, particularly for federal elections, Sault Ste Marie was connected with Chapleau and Timmins. Did that make any sense to you?

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): Wawa.

Mr Martin: I mean Wawa. I'm sorry. I got that wrong. Yes, I sometimes forget where I come from.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): Oh, really?

Mr Martin: No, actually, I don't. For me, Wawa and Sault Ste Marie, as I was saying, tend to be in many significant ways — although some people from Wawa may argue with me on this and may take exception because they are a very independent and self-sufficient entity up there. I know from having lived there for a good chunk of my life and having actually enjoyed myself living there. I often tell people that my high school years, particularly in Wawa, were idyllic, all seven of them.

Anyway, what I was saying is that Wawa and Sault Ste Marie are connected in many significant ways. But when they drew the federal boundaries last time, they put Wawa in with Chapleau and Timmins, and that didn't make any sense. Anybody who lived up there would have

told the people who were doing that, if they'd been asked, that it didn't make any sense, but they went ahead and did it anyway.

In this case, I think at the end of the day you're going to find that decisions are being made that are of the same quality. In the amalgamation of communities that's going to happen, yes, in some instances some communities will come together and say, "Yes, it makes sense." But in other instances, communities which are seen as a third entity, perhaps a little smaller than the other two, will be forced to join with a community that perhaps they don't feel particularly aligned with, and that will be problematic. But this government feels it has the power to do that, to go out there and push people together and do those kinds of things that in my mind take away, move us away, turn our back on some of the traditions that we've developed over the years, some of the really exciting and positive and constructive dialogue that goes on.

Yes, that's often difficult, and there's nothing wrong with good, honest debate where our differences of opinion are aired and put on the table. But let's set those tables. Let's make sure those tables exist. Let's make sure that people have the right to participate, whether it's through representative democracy or with direct participation in those things. Let's not take away from that. Let's not diminish that.

At the very least, if you're going to do that, let's have some discussion about it. Let's make sure we're out there talking with people about it and let's make sure we're taking the time that's necessary to do it right. Because in this instance there's no big hurry here; there's no really big need here. We're not talking about megabucks, diminishing this place by 27 members, in the larger picture of things. When you compare the money that you suggest you're going to save by cutting 27 members out of here with what it's going to cost you to do a couple of referendums — and it sounds to me by way of the legislation that you're bringing in through another door that that's the way you propose to run this province — I suggest to you that at the end of the day you will have lost money as opposed to saving money. I'm told that it could cost you anywhere from \$23 million to \$40 million per referendum.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): That's what they told us at committee.

Mr Martin: That's what they told us at the committee. So the cost excuse doesn't work and doesn't make any sense.

I'm saying to you, why don't you take some time and cost all this out? Why don't you take some time and bring some people in who know how to do that, who can speak to you in an objective way about all of these things so that at the end of the day you make the right decision as opposed to the politically expedient decision, which is what we're doing here? It just doesn't make any sense. As I said before, nobody here is suggesting that change isn't necessary, that from time to time we shouldn't sit down and look at issues such as the one contained in this bill and that we shouldn't be responding to changes in demographics, changes in the size of population, changes in how communities develop or don't develop, and be making changes, but let's do them in a thoughtful way.

1540

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We do not have a quorum available in the House. I wonder if you would have a quorum call.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Would you check for a quorum, please.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague from London and yourself for doing all you could to make sure that people are present in this chamber as we make speeches about issues of importance to the people of Ontario. It's interesting to note that absolutely none of the Liberals are here for this debate, even though, as I said earlier yesterday, their member for Renfrew North gave an excellent exposé on the ins and outs of this particular bill, and there weren't enough Conservatives in the House a few minutes ago to have a quorum so we could carry out the business of this place. What can I say? It's consistent with their sense of the relevance of this House and how important this debate is.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Tony, are you going to hear the Premier tonight?

Mr Martin: No, actually I'm not going to hear him tonight in the Sault. That's an interesting point you make because —

Mrs Marland: My brother is going to be there.

Mr Martin: Is he? Of course he will be, and so he should, he's a good Conservative.

There's an interesting sideline there. The Premier is going to Sault Ste Marie tonight to a Progressive Conservative fund-raising function; mind you, paid for by the public. There was an invitation given to him to meet, while he's there, with the mayor of our city because we had some important issues to discuss, but he couldn't find time.

Interjection: Too busy raising funds.

Mr Martin: He was too busy. The schedule was too tight. The mayor after all is only elected by all the people to speak on their behalf about issues of concern to them, but he doesn't have time to hear him.

It was interesting that last night, in my discussion here before this House, I shared with this place some of the concern our mayor and council have over the direction that this place is taking, that this government is taking re how they do the affairs of government. They raised a particular concern about the move, so very obviously, to governing by referendum. What he said, and I'll repeat it again, was, "Northern Ontario's sparse population means its voice will be lost when the people speak in province-wide referendums." Now the Premier is in Sault Ste Marie tonight and he doesn't have time to talk to the mayor of our city.

As I said, it's consistent and it just helps me make the argument here this afternoon that this government has no respect for the democratic process, no respect for those who are duly elected to speak on behalf of their constitu-

ents. This piece of legislation will move us ever so significantly down a road where this place will become no more functional than the board of directors of a corporation and will have no interest in anything other than the bottom line: no interest in health care, no interest in education, no interest in social services, no interest in working with the communities of this province which find themselves challenged economically to make sure there is the resource necessary and present in their communities for people to have jobs and that they're able to make a living and look after their children.

That's where we're heading if we don't slow this down, if we don't somehow impress upon this government how important it is to take the necessary time to speak to people and have meaningful consultation.

Not to be adversarial or create too much stress across the way, but I suggest that another facet of this particular piece of legislation is that it's very obviously a gerrymandering of the most obvious and odious description.

It's funny; they didn't even have to do anything. In fact, in terms of backroom rejigging and sitting down and drawing lines and figuring out who lived where and who voted for whom, they're taking a blueprint that was put together by the federal government that will see a reduction of seats in those parts of the province that haven't recently supported the Conservative cause, Conservative agenda, this Conservative government, and reducing significantly the number of representatives from those areas: northern Ontario, southeastern Ontario and the core of Metro Toronto.

They have actually added one seat to what is now often referred to as the 905 belt, which tends to be that group of people who support the very right-wing, neo-conservative approach of this government to matters of state. In so doing, by agreeing to this makeup of the way we represent ourselves in this province, they will guarantee for themselves, as much as they can in a democracy, that they will be around.

I said last night that with the introduction of a very right-wing, neo-conservative agenda in this province in a very fast manner — we've seen that — and now with this piece of legislation, we will cast that in stone. That is something we will not be able to change quickly if we find that it isn't in the best interests of all the people in Ontario, if we're not able to have a healthy election in this province that gives us some guarantee that if people are upset and particular regions or groups of people are upset, they have a way of sending a message to this place by way of their vote for whom they choose to represent themselves. This, in my mind, is very obviously a gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries of Ontario to suit the interests of the present government.

The argument is made out there — it's made in my own community — why do you need more members in this House, as opposed to Ottawa, to represent the views and interests of the people in various areas of Ontario? Anybody who does this job or has had any reason to come into the office of a member of the provincial Parliament, as opposed to a member of the federal Parliament, will know that we deal with issues that are much closer to the ground for people, that are much more direct for people and have impact on their daily lives.

The fact that we deliver programs such as health care, education and social services means that we are out there on the front lines every day explaining to people how they can access the system so that they get the service they know is due to them or so they perhaps can get better service or so they perhaps can put in a complaint about the fact that they didn't get something they felt they should have got.

When we, as provincial members, go back to our constituencies — I'll talk about that a little further as I talk about the role of members in this place — it's important that we have manageable jurisdictions, that we have a manageable number of people we represent and that geographically we are able, when we go home to our ridings, to get to the communities we represent on a regular basis to hear their concerns and understand what their experience has been, and then bring it to this place as honestly and as fairly as we can and present it and get some response or reaction to that.

1550

This piece of legislation has all kinds of very serious implications for the jurisdiction of Ontario if we let it go through as it is, if we don't make every effort to make sure that this government has to go before its people and answer some questions about what it is going to do. I would suggest to people out there, as I said before, that if they are concerned after hearing the speech of the member for Renfrew North last night, if they're concerned after hearing some of what I have to say and after reading some of what is starting to come out in the media right now about all of this and they have some questions or some interest, that they make their voices heard, that they participate in the democracy we have here in Ontario and we cherish so much, so that in this instance we do the right thing and do not just bulldoze ahead in a big hurry and destroy some things that have taken so long to put in place.

I said last night that we're under attack, and we really are. Democracy is under attack; this place is under attack by this legislation. I read a definition last night for you and I think it would be important and helpful to do it again. It's a definition of democracy.

"Democracy is a form of government in which political power resides in all the people and is exercised by them directly or is given to elected representatives, with each citizen sharing equally in political privilege and duty and with his right to do so protected by free elections and other guarantees." That's what a democracy is. That's in Funk and Wagnall's dictionary.

Within that democracy, we establish, as part of how we do business, a legislature. Let me read to you, ever so briefly, what a legislature does, lest some of you don't understand or have forgotten or lest you're asked by your constituents just what this place is about, because there are a lot of people out there who don't know what this place is about, who don't know what happens here in this place or what we do when we come here, who don't understand the process at all. If they happen to be tuning in this afternoon, I think it's important they know so they can participate more fully in the discussion.

"The role of the Legislature: A legislature makes laws; its members are legislators. Ontario's legislators are the

130 elected members of provincial Parliament, also known as MPPs. The province is divided into 130 constituencies, or ridings, and each MPP represents one of these electoral districts. Although MPPs work year-round, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario only meets at Queen's Park from March to June and from September to December. During those months, MPPs study and debate the bills (proposed laws) and policies put before them, generally by the government. It is their job to explore" — and this is where it becomes really important for people to listen, because this is what's going to be inhibited by way of this bill — "all arguments for and against each proposal. In that way, each member can weigh the views and concerns of voters" — their constituents, the people they represent — "and fellow MPPs before deciding whether to support or reject any given measure."

That's what we do here. I don't know a member in this place — however, I have to qualify that by saying I don't know all members in this place, but the members I do know, I know they take that job very seriously and they work very hard at being up on the various pieces of legislation that are coming before this House, researching and reading and meeting with people so that they might participate in a meaningful way in the debate and in the discussion.

To attack in any way the integrity of this place, and I'm saying to you today that this bill is in fact an attack on this place, is to demean, to take away, to diminish the very good work that we do here and in the exercise of our participating in the debate and listening to the debate on behalf of our constituents, of our voters. Not to be able to represent them in a way that we feel does them justice is a diminishing of democracy, a reducing of the ability of this place to make laws that will be supportive of an improvement in the quality of life of all of the people who choose Ontario as their home.

By the way, I just want to say I've got a fair bit of material here that I'm referring to this afternoon and it's important material and I got a lot of help from the legislative library in putting this together. I want to say thanks to them for their assistance, particularly Susanne Hynes, who on very short notice did a lot of good work for me in trying to pull together the pieces that I needed to make a cogent argument here this afternoon for, if not the stopping of this bill, the rethinking of the government around this bill, but at least the slowing of it down so that we can have proper and fuller public consultation about it so that people out there will know what it is that the government is intending, why it is they're intending to do this and what the ultimate result will be or impact will be on their lives, on the lives of their families and friends and on the lives of their communities.

So we have a democracy, we have a Legislature within a democracy that represents the views and voices of people as we make laws that affect all of us, as we decide how we're going to collect taxes, as we decide how we're going to spend the money that we collect and how we deliver services and how much money we spend on each. It's very important, it's essential, that each person in this province is confident that they have a voice, that they have some place that they can go to

express a concern, a support or to be critical of what it is that the government is doing.

Within that Legislature we have what are called the members — myself, the member for London Centre, the member for Algoma, Liberals, New Democrats, Conservatives, all of us who present ourselves at election time, who come to that exercise from having in many instances worked very hard in our communities to make life better, sometimes as a businessperson, sometimes as a lawyer, sometimes as a teacher, sometimes as a community development professional or a social activist. But we all come from places where we've had our own set of experiences, where we've learned what it is to live life in a particular community in a particular way. Through a thoughtful process of self-analysis, through sitting with family members, through talking with friends and colleagues in the community and with the support of our political parties, we present ourselves for election to this place.

When you juxtapose that with the complicity of this government in everything out there today that is so negative and critical and demeaning of politicians, I guess it begins to make some sense again. There are many of us here who do not hold the view of so many across the way and so many people out there in Ontario that we politicians are simply pigs at the trough or people who come to this job because of the pay that goes with it or the gold-plated pension plan, as the member for Renfrew North talked about yesterday. As a matter of fact, I'd suggest to you that probably most of us, at least the ones I know of and talk to, didn't know what the pay was when they came here. They had no idea what it was they were going to get when they came to this place.

1600

Mr Preston: Sure we did.

Mr Martin: I'll tell you my own experience. The first time I knew what I was getting paid, other than the fact that I got a paycheque at the end of the first month, was when I read it all laid out in my own local newspaper. There it was. I took it home and I said: "Anna, you know all the questions that you asked me about how we were going to pay and what it was going to look like and how we were going to pay the bills in this new line of work? Here it is." That wasn't my concern. Was it your concern, Mr Preston? No, it wasn't your concern. I suggest to you that it is not the concern of most people in this place. They come here to serve.

Many of you took a cut in pay when you came here. I know a couple of people in this place, because I've chatted with them from time to time, who have worked in some very prestigious and good jobs, excellent jobs, and got well paid, who took a big cut in pay to come to this place and serve as a servant of a constituency. I commend you for that. It speaks to the integrity that many of you bring to this job that you've done that and that you're willing to serve without complaint in spite of that, and the effort you make.

This afternoon and yesterday, in preparing for this speech and knowing that this piece of legislation was an attack on all of us, I spent a bit of time just going through the résumés of some of the people here. Myself, I'm a community development professional. I did a number of things before I came to this job. I owned a

small business. I was a trustee on a school board. I have four kids. I've been married for 12 years. All of those things. I belong to a church; I go regularly on Sunday. I bring all that with me. I belong to the New Democratic Party. I'm a supporter of the labour movement. I'm a supporter of efforts like soup kitchens and food banks when there's not enough money in the take-home pay for poor people to feed themselves and their families.

That's what I do. That's what I bring to this place. I'm no more worthy of this than so many of my colleagues here because of that. That's just me. Coming here, I hope I'm able to share from that experience, to participate in the debates from that experience and that set of circumstances.

Let's look for a second at the member for Riverdale. She was raised in Labrador. Since moving to the Toronto riding of Riverdale in 1978, she's been cofounder of Citizens for a Safe Environment, executive director of the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund, director of the Co-op Housing Federation of Toronto, cofounder of the Bain Avenue Day Care centre and president of the Bain Avenue Housing Co-op, and it goes on.

The member for Beaches-Woodbine: Before being elected to the Legislature, Ms Lankin was provincial negotiator with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. As equal opportunities coordinator, she worked to change attitudes and improve working conditions for women. She also spent three years as a member of the workers' compensation tribunal. Ms Lankin joined the Ontario public service in 1976 as a correctional officer at Toronto's Don jail. What a wealth of experience. What a resource sent to this place by the constituents of the riding of Beaches-Woodbine.

We have 130 such people sent to this place with varying degrees of experience and knowledge and understanding and different views. That's the richness of Ontario. The richness of this Legislature is that always, it seems, we have a nice mix of people around the table here who bring different perspectives and views. We don't always agree. We would have preferred not to be knocked out of government in 1995. We would have preferred to have been in the majority, but you are now, and in two or three years who knows what's going to happen?

With this bill, though, you're padding it for yourselves so that there's less chance of your getting defeated, and that's unfair. That's changing the rules in midstream and it's gerrymandering. We didn't do that. We came in here for four or five years and worked hard to put an imprint on the daily life of people in this province. We brought in laws, we changed the way we work together and the approach to a whole lot of issues in this province, and then we went to the electors after four or five years and they gave us a message.

Interjection.

Mr Martin: No, no. You're wanting, in a month and a half in this place, to change the way we do that so that you're guaranteed, as much as you can be, as I said before, in a democracy, because even in areas where we feel we're guaranteed we're going to win, people can change their mind and have done so in this country and this province in the last few elections, both federally and provincially.

They may do that to you, so be careful. But for God's sake don't change the rules in midstream so that it's padded in your favour, which is what you're doing here. This is what you're doing. The areas where you're taking away membership to this place are areas where you are not getting members elected. You couldn't beat us in the election —

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): Take the riding away.

Mr Martin: Exactly. You couldn't beat the member for Lake Nipigon in the election, so what are you going to do? You're going to take his riding away. He's not the only one. That's what you're doing.

Mr Pettit: They're not our boundaries.

Mr Silipo: They're not our boundaries.

Mr Martin: That's right, exactly, they're not our boundaries, so why don't we make them our boundaries? Why don't we go out and talk to the folks out there? Why don't we spend the time in this House that's necessary to have this debate at length and make them our boundaries, make them meaningful, make this place a meaningful place for the kind of debate that we should have, that lives up to the respect people have for our Legislature?

I have a little book here that's called Government Caucus Members Biographies. I know who you guys are. Let's just pick a couple. Mr Gary Leadston, Kitchener-Wilmot: "Until his election, Mr Leadston was employed as an attendance counsellor with the Waterloo County Board of Education, a position he held for 27 years. For eight years prior to that, he was a police constable with the Kitchener police department. Mr Leadston is a graduate of the Ontario Police College and has studied psychology and sociology at Wilfrid Laurier University." A good man, a man sent here by his constituents; a good person, sent here by his constituents.

Why are you being complicit out there with those who would hammer and smash politicians and knock us down and call us all kinds of rude names and make accusations about us that are just totally untrue, when you know that in all the caucuses here we have honourable people who serve their constituents above and beyond the call of duty, who work hard in this place and who want to see this place operate in an effective and meaningful fashion on behalf of the people they represent?

Mr Preston, Brant-Haldimand, born in Hamilton, 19 — no, I shouldn't say that. Should I give the year of your birth? It's 1935.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's private information.

Mr Martin: It's published. You're next.

"Preston spent six years as a non-commissioned officer in the Royal Canadian Engineers. After several years in the insurance sector in sales, management and the operation of his own agency, he founded Preston House in 1984, a group home for boys in need between the ages of 12 and 18."

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): So he's qualified to comment on child care issues.

Mr Martin: Absolutely. So let's give him the opportunity to do that. He's a man who brings a wealth of experience to this place. Why are you always in such a

big hurry to ram legislation through, to not take the time to hear from Mr Preston? How many times have you stood in this House, Mr Preston, and spoken to the issues of the day and for how long? For five or 10 minutes at a time when you're given an opportunity.

Most of you, and it's too bad, stand up and read prepared texts. I know you have something to say. I know you've come from a place where you have constituents, when you go home, who come to you and sit down and talk to you about how the health care system or the education system or the social service system affects them, and you want to come and share that here but you're not given the opportunity to.

Let's look at some Liberals. We've got some wonderful Liberals here.

Interjection: Not here.

Mr Martin: Not here. No, they're not here right now, but they're around.

1610

Interjection: One's here.

Mr Martin: Oh, I'm sorry, the leader's here.

Interjection.

Mr Martin: Absolutely. I don't know what I did with my list.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. There's too much shouting and talking. I ask the member for Sault Ste Marie to bring his debate within the terms of the bill.

Mr Martin: Sorry, Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr Pouliot: It's these people. He has lost his Liberal list, maybe to the left, maybe to the right.

Mr Martin: It's okay, I have it.

We have some very honourable and wonderful members represented in this House under the banner of the Liberal Party of Ontario, including among them the leader who is in the House right now and listening to this debate and very interested in this debate because this piece of legislation is going to affect, very directly and in a negative way, that part of this province that she and I love very much, northern Ontario.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition): That's right.

Mr Martin: That's right.

Mrs Marland: Are you going to read mine?

Mr Martin: Sure, I'll read yours: "Margaret Marland who ran to be Speaker of the House," and should have been elected, but here we go.

Mrs McLeod: Should we give a test? Does anybody know that Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay are in northern Ontario?

Mr Martin: That's a good question. Does anybody across —

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I did implore the members to bring themselves to order, and to some extent they have complied. But one of the things I said that maybe the member for Sault Ste Marie didn't get was that I wanted him to bring the context of his debate within the bill, please.

Mr Martin: It obviously is. This bill, I said in my opening statement, is an attack on the members of this

place, is an attack on politicians in this province, and I resent that. I stand here publicly to say that, and I'm not at all concerned in doing that.

I'm just reading the biographies of some of the members so that people out there know who is serving them and that we have a wonderful group of people here who work very hard and who have the best interests of their constituencies in mind. They should be allowed to participate more fully in the debate of this place and on this bill, rammed through in less than a month and a half, that will change the face of this province as it's represented in this House. To be done in such an offhand, almost unthoughtful, manner does not respect the role of the members of this place. It's going to diminish the number of us by 27, which will diminish, in my mind, the democracy that we've all come to appreciate and to enjoy.

The member for Mississauga South: "The Mississauga South MPP, sponsors many public forums and seminars each year in her constituency, including a Valentine's Day blood donor clinic and a seniors' seminar. The Mississauga City Centre Rotary Club, of which she is an honorary member, is only one of the many organizations that have benefited from Mrs Marland's community efforts. Others include the United Way of Peel Region and the Mississauga Women's Hospital Auxiliary. She is also a past member of the boards of governors of Sheridan College and the Oakville-Trafalgar Hospital."

Interjection: Is that one going?

Mr Martin: Is that one going to be closed down?

Mrs Marland: No, of course not.

Mr Martin: Okay, it's not.

A person I've just come to know in the last year and a half here in this House, the member for Oakwood, Mr Colle: "Best known as a Metropolitan Toronto councillor where he represented the riding of York-Eglinton for six years. While on Metro council he served as TTC commissioner for six years and was TTC chairman from 1991 to 1994. Mike also chaired Metro's economic development and planning committee and served on the anti-drug task force. He has been in the front lines promoting the economic and environmental sustainability of Canadian cities."

Another person I'd like to, ever so briefly, raise for your consideration as you consider the thoughts I am presenting re this bill and the attack that this is on this place and those of us who serve here, if I can only find it, is Mr Bartolucci from Sudbury, a teacher, a principal in the Catholic school system up there, a family man who has children and who comes to this place with a great passion for that part of the province, a colleague of mine in northern Ontario who is very, very concerned about the impact of this bill on that particular part of this province. Those are the people that this government is being complicit in attacking, in saying that somehow they're not contributing in a meaningful fashion, that somehow it's a waste of money to have us here.

What price democracy, I ask? We've had people from this country across the seas to fight in wars, to protect the freedom we know as democracy, and here we are in this House, going through an exercise that's going to diminish people's ability to have their voice heard for simply and

purely cost considerations in a way that is totally juxtaposed to a truly democratic process.

A month and a half: in that month and a half perhaps two or three days of debate in this House. "Maybe," my House leader says, "a couple of days of consultation in the Toronto area where we know what the prevailing wind is saying at the moment" — that may change — and they will not agree to go out to those parts of the province that are going to be affected most directly by this legislation, will not go up to northern Ontario.

I don't know why. I suggest to you that perhaps they're afraid of what they might hear, afraid of the truth, afraid to face those constituents who are going to lose something in this exercise. They will not go out to southeastern Ontario and talk to the people who are going to lose a voice in this place, who are going to lose the ability to have an impact and make a difference, by what they think and feel, through their member.

They will not go out to rural Ontario. Up my way anyway, and probably in other parts of rural Ontario, the good people who work in the agricultural industry are very concerned and upset. As a matter of fact, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture was through Algoma only about a week ago, and the first thing people wanted to talk to him about and the first thing he wanted to talk to them about was Bill 81 and how it was going to impact significantly and seriously on their ability to influence decisions made in this place that affect very directly their ability to grow food for all of us and sell it in a way that means they'll make a profit on their work.

Let me go back to some of the stuff the research people dug out for me at the library.

"The Function of a Legislature: "Perhaps the most important responsibility of the contemporary Legislature is to provide a public forum in which the actions of the government can be examined and scrutinized. This scrutinizing function operates at two levels corresponding to the two confrontations underlying all parliamentary business. The first, which is reflected in the very shape of the chamber, is the confrontation between government and opposition."

By way of this bill, if it rolls out the way it should, if the trend continues, you are effectively — not by going to the electorate and having an election, not by due democratic process, but by an act of this House which you have the right to do because you're a majority government — significantly diminishing the ability of the opposition to participate in that debate.

"The second confrontation is equally important, although less obviously manifested and usually less fiercely demonstrated. It is the historical confrontation between Parliament, answerable to the people, and the executive appointed by the crown."

I don't need to say a whole lot more about that because my colleague from Renfrew North spoke about that yesterday in a very clear and eloquent way: that this government is going to reduce the House, but not, along with that, significantly reduce the resource of the executive arm of this government.

That's what the Legislature is about and it doesn't work unless you have members who represent constitu-

ents in the kinds of numbers and in ways that are effective. I know when I go back to Sault Ste Marie on a Thursday night I spend all day Friday, from early morning, usually a breakfast meeting, into the night, where I go to a public function of some sort to hear what people have to say or to participate in a celebration of some sort, but all day Friday I spend listening to and talking with my constituents — all day.

Saturday, because I have four young children at home, I try to limit the amount of work I do, but invariably I end up working Saturday. I have a meeting or two usually in the morning and something in the afternoon, and oftentimes there's a celebration again of some sort on Saturday night. There's a tug and a pull to go to as many of those as you can, because people want you there. They want their member. They don't necessarily want Tony Martin there; they want their member of Parliament. They want the person they elected to represent them at Queen's Park to be at these functions because it's important for them. It adds an air of credibility or specialness to the event if we're there.

1620

You all know that. You all go to those things. You go home on Friday and you work all day, on Saturday you work, and then Sundays — well, I know I try desperately to keep Sunday free for family but it's not always possible. Sometimes we have to come back down here because there are meetings early Monday morning or Sunday night, and sometimes there are just events in your community. I don't know what other members do, but I try to have stuff that I do on Sunday involve my family so that I can double up, so I can make it a family event as well as a public event and in that way do my job.

All that is to say to you that this place only works effectively if we have members here who are capable and able and up to the task, and I suggest to you that we have a ton of them. We represent jurisdictions that are workable. You can go home on a weekend and visit and get a sense of what's going on and what they're concerned about.

My colleague from Algoma, Bud Wildman, my God, he's been in this place for 20 years now. I don't know a weekend that he doesn't go home and then have to get on the road on Friday and Saturday up to White River or Hornepayne or Dubreuilville, or if not that way, he's over in Spragge or Blind River or Iron Bridge. Those are municipalities. They have issues and concerns and they want to speak to their member. If this piece of legislation goes through, you take that plus all of Manitoulin Island — and listen to this. Even the community of Killarney, which is south of Sudbury, becomes part of his riding. Then up north, he picks up a chunk of the member for Nipigon's riding and he takes in Manitouwadge and the thriving metropolis of Mobert. That's a huge riding.

I know, because I'm a personal friend of his, how difficult it is for him and the work that he does. Thank God he's a workaholic. Thank God he has a partner who understands the commitment he makes to this place and to the work he does and supports him in that, and has a family that does the same. Thank God for that, because otherwise he would not be able to do it. He would not have lasted the 20 years that he has here.

The pace that he keeps — and people say of him that he has the constitution of a horse — would in my estimation slay any ordinary mortal, and you want to add on to his responsibility, or whoever comes next in that riding if it's not him, down the line somewhere, another whole riding that is going to make going from one end of the riding to the other the same as, say, me going from Sault Ste Marie to Toronto? We're talking eight hours of travel — no, we're talking 10 or 12 hours now with Manitoulin Island. How do you cover that area, Mr Preston? How do you do that?

The new riding that our leader, Mr Hampton, and Frank Miclash will have to come to terms around in the next election is bigger than most countries in the world today. How do you cover that? How do you represent that jurisdiction in an effective manner in this place?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): How about the federal member?

Mr Martin: The federal issues are different. They really are. The federal members concern themselves about issues of international affairs and —

Interjection: Canada pension.

Mr Martin: Canada pension. That's right. I've talked to my colleague in Algoma, Brent St Denis, and he tells me that I'm right. The issues they deal with are not so on the ground, so in your face as the ones we deal with: health care, social services, education and all of those things.

You know that, any of you who have done constituency work. Any of you who genuinely attempt to be a constituency member in this place will know the effort that it takes to be in touch with all the people who want to talk to you in your constituency. You know that, and that the things you deal with are far more personal than the things the federal members deal with re their constituents. So it doesn't make any sense that you would copy the federal boundary map for Ontario and use it here in this place. It doesn't make any sense at all that we would do that. What other province in this — anyway, it just doesn't make any sense.

I had another little piece here that I wanted to share with you that was really important. It talked about the skills that a member needs to participate in this place and to do a good job. Actually, it's all the skills that I've been talking about over the last hour or so and it's what causes me some great concern over why we're doing what we're doing.

Previous governments had a tradition in this place of bringing legislation in, introducing it, having prolonged debate about it or bringing it to committee, and if it was felt collectively here that we needed to take it out across the province, we did that.

This government —

Mr Preston: You did whatever you thought.

Mr Martin: No, no. We took it out and we heard from the people and we made significant changes when we brought it back and ultimately introduced it as legislation in this place. This government is not willing to do that.

All we're asking as a party, as a part of this House over here, is that you take the time to think this thing through, to be thoughtful about it, to hear from people and to draw up, if we have to, a new set of boundaries in

Ontario that speaks to the reality of Ontario, that actually lives up to some of the traditional ways we've done that in this province over the years.

For example, since the mid-1950s it's been the usual procedure in this province, after the publication of figures available from the regular census carried out every 10 years, for the province to look at and establish procedures for the redistribution of riding boundaries. In 1962, 1973 and 1983, this was done by the appointment of an independent commission through order in council. Prior to the commission appointments, the terms of reference and guidelines on procedures to be followed by the boundaries commission were established by resolution in this Legislature. Historically, the decision on the new boundaries and ridings rests with the Legislature. When the report of the boundaries commission is finished, the Speaker would be charged with tabling it in the House in the form of a piece of legislation. It would then follow the tradition on a regular route that any bill does in this House.

The terms of reference used by the commission for the purpose of distribution were usually considered as follows: community or diversity of interest; means of communication; topographical features; population trends; the varying of rural electoral districts; existing boundaries of municipalities or wards; and special geographic considerations, including the sparsity, density or relative rate of growth in population in the various regions of the province. Accessibility, size and shape were also considered. These were the things that previous parliaments in this House considered when they made these changes. This is what they looked at.

I'm going to wind up my time in this debate by saying to you and appealing to you about that part of this province that I feel particularly attached to and that I feel is going to be particularly damaged by this legislation, and that's northern Ontario. Over the years, this House, in consultation, through I'm sure some significant discussion and debate, decided that it was so important that we hear the voice of northern Ontario in a meaningful and full way. So we guaranteed that we would never allow the representation in this House from northern Ontario to be less than 15 seats. I suggest to you that we should continue to honour that commitment.

The member for Renfrew North talked last night about how on the federal scene we make special provisions for places like Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, smaller provinces with fewer population, to make sure their voice is effectively present in the Houses of Parliament that they need to be represented at. You're going to take that away from northern Ontario if you move with this piece of legislation.

1630

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I was listening carefully to the comments of the member for Sault Ste Marie. One of the points that has been raised in the argument about reducing the number of provincial ridings is the issue of whether or not the kind of work that provincial members do is more directly related to the constituents than what the federal members do. There certainly is room for argument on this issue, but I

personally am persuaded by the view that the work the federal members do is just as close to the constituents. Of course, in Ontario most of the federal members are Liberals and so it could be argued that they don't have any policies to defend, but that may not be a serious point.

The issues that are dealt with by a federal member, and I have had the opportunity to talk to the federal members in the two ridings that overlap my provincial riding, would be such matters as immigration — and I know in some ridings immigration is an everyday issue for federal members' offices — and unemployment insurance. That is an everyday issue for a lot of constituents. They often call the wrong office trying to inquire about those kinds of issues. Income tax is an everyday problem for most people in Ontario. It is a problem that people think about very regularly and speak to their members about. Crime — issues related to the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act and issues related to parole issues — we hear about that in our offices and often have to refer them to the federal members.

Matters involving business development and programs for employment are matters which are federal as well as provincial and often take up time on the part of the federal member. Matters involving federal pensions are everyday issues that people inquire of their federal member about. Those are just a few of the issues that federal members are responsible for and I would argue that they are everyday matters that a federal member would be just as likely to run into and that require close attention for the constituent.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I enjoyed the remarks of the member for Sault Ste Marie and the special problems that confront him. I am wondering whether he was offended, as I know many of the government members as well as opposition members have been offended, by the title of this piece of legislation, the Fewer Politicians Act, whether he feels that panders to a fairly widespread feeling engendered by some who don't like government and don't like the intervention of government in their business, whether he feels that members of this House and other elected representatives should be offended by the, for want of a better word, smart-aleck title of Fewer Politicians Act. If one wanted to say a reduction in members and try to justify it, I think it would make some better sense to use that title. I wonder if the member was offended by that and whether he believes that reinforces the feeling among many in the population that indeed we are to be scoffed at or scorned as opposed to being supported in some instances.

Second, I was interested when I listened to the special responsibilities he has. Speaking of the north, I'm a northern member as well; I've represented the north end of St Catharines for some period of time and I can appreciate the difficulty in representing a northern riding. But I can drive across my riding in about five minutes and I don't see the same problem being confronted in terms of being able to represent a constituency as the member would, but I am interested that in ridings he notes in northern Ontario many members will have constituencies that will be larger than many European countries and larger than some provinces. I was interested

to note that he shared with those of us who have very compact urban ridings the special challenges facing those who are responsible for large northern ridings.

Mrs Boyd: I'm very pleased to rise and congratulate my colleague from Sault Ste Marie on his speech, in which he tried very hard to explain to the people of Ontario why he believes this bill is not the appropriate way to deal with reform of this place. He is very clear that representative politics are extraordinarily important to democracy and that this kind of representation is particularly important in these very difficult times. I think he talked with great effect about the abilities and the sacrifices that people make when they agree to represent their fellow citizens in this place, and the necessity for us all to work together to ensure that representation truly gives voice to the very diverse needs of the people of Ontario.

My colleague always speaks eloquently of the north. Unlike my friend from St Catharines, I don't claim to have a northern riding, since my riding is clearly named "centre," so I need him to know that he has taught me a great deal about the real problems that go on. I'm always reminded, when we talk about this, that the term "riding" used to be the term for a particular area to be represented; it was the amount of space around which the member could ride in a given period of time. The size of ridings, the difficulty of representing the people within a riding, particularly if they are sparsely scattered over a large area, cannot be underestimated. It is to our benefit to hear from our colleagues from northern Ontario about the real difficulties of representation under this current bill.

Mrs Marland: I was commenting yesterday on this legislation in a brief two-minute question and answer, and I just want to complete that comment. It goes in hand with the previous speaker, which is what we're supposed to do in this two minutes. That's simply to say that first of all I support this bill 100%, but in doing so, I really wanted to say yesterday that I recognize, and I think all of us do in this place, that it's a difficult situation when we all know each other in this place as colleagues and we see colleagues who will be running against other colleagues in the same ridings, or who will lose their own riding completely because of the redistribution and they have to run in someone else's riding. I accept very sincerely the difficulty that presents to colleagues on both sides of this chamber.

However, I also believe very strongly in the ability of all of us as individuals to represent our people in the same way that federal members can. I can't defend an argument that we need more representation in Ontario than does the federal House. I guess I'm very fortunate in Mississauga South, because my riding happens to expand; it doesn't conflict with my adjacent colleagues; it so happens they're from the same caucus. But the difficulties of redistribution are always a challenge for incumbent members. On that point I have a lot of sympathy for our colleagues, but in terms of demonstrating what this government is committed to, which is the reduction of expense and overjurisdiction, I do very much support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Sault Ste Marie; two minutes.

Mr Martin: I thank the members who spoke for their comments. To the members from Mississauga and Muskoka-Georgian Bay, yes, there are differences of opinion on a lot of these issues. We should have that debate. That's what this place is about, what the process in this place is about, so let's have it. Let's have it out there; let's have it in here. Let's not cut this off and not have that debate, because there are important issues and we need to discuss them. The member for St Catharines is absolutely right. The name of the bill, even, smacks of a backhand to the members of this place and to this Legislature. Of course the member for London Centre and I share a lot of common views on different things in this place.

I ask the members across the way to please — there are two defining moments so far in this government's history, for me. One is the day you announced that you were going to take away 22% of the income of the poorest among us. This bill is the second. It smacks to me of an attitude that was present for me as a kid, which is the attitude of the bully: First you pick on the weakest to make a point, and then you beat up some of your own. That's what packs of bullies do: They beat up the weakest and then they beat up some of their own to make a point.

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Let me again read for you a definition. It's the definition of "bully." See if it doesn't apply — if I can find it here. It says, "Bully: a swaggering, quarrelsome, usually cowardly person who terrorizes weaker people; a hired ruffian; a pimp; to intimidate or coerce by threats." I suggest to you that if you keep doing the things you're doing in the way that you have in this place, that's exactly what you're going to be seen as and that's how you're going to be judged come the next election.

The Acting Speaker: I'm glad you didn't use the term because I would have ruled it unparliamentary.

Hon Mr Sampson: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have agreement of the House to have the leader of the official opposition speak now and then subsequent to that come back to our side of the House for our rotation.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the wish of the House? Agreed? It is agreed.

Mrs McLeod: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I do thank members of the House and particularly the member of the government party who was to speak next in the rotation for allowing me to precede him. It's one of the realities of being a northern Ontario representative that if you're not out of the House by a particular hour, Air Canada does not wait. It's important to me, in the name of representation, to get home to my riding this evening, so I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate in time for me still to be able to get back to my riding.

I suppose I'm feeling as I rise today to participate in it that it leaves little to be said after the very eloquent leadoff speech on the part of our colleague from Renfrew North who addressed the issues of concern that many of us bring to this debate. It's not my intention today to reiterate all of the points that were covered by the

member for Renfrew North, nor would the realities of limitations on the time of debate make it possible to reiterate all that he covered, but I sincerely want to commend his speech yesterday to all of those who are interested in representative democracy because I believe his message was important to the whole issue of representative democracy.

What I did want to do today was to add my views to those of my colleague and to reinforce the views that he expressed yesterday. I wanted to participate in this debate because of my belief, much to my regret, that the presentation of this bill is indeed an act of the most ultimate cynicism on the part of the government. To me it represents cynicism about politics, it represents cynicism about representative democracy and indeed it represents cynicism about democratic government, even though they are themselves an elected and presumably democratic government.

The bill was cynical from its first conception when it was presented as an election promise, an election promise which was clearly calculated to win popular support, although the economic benefits to the taxpayer or to the province were clearly minimal. It was certainly cynical in the naming of the bill, the Fewer Politicians Act. If that wasn't a clear indication that the intent of this bill was a pitch for popular support, nothing else would be. There have been many bills in the history of not only this province but this country that have dealt with the issue of electoral boundaries and redistribution of boundaries. None of them have had such a cynical name.

It was even more cynical when in presenting this bill the government decided that it had to restage its campaign event to show how many MPPs they would be taking away by again putting empty chairs on a flatbed truck.

I find it almost unbelievable that this party that won the election — I concede that; this party won the election; they are now the government — needs to resort to this kind of repetitious campaign event to get some kind of media attention for its bill. It's a reality that governments get media attention when they take action. It's a reality that government makes news. It seems to me as though this government is making news whether it wants to or not, and often the kind of news it's getting is news it doesn't want to make. As a result of that, they stooped to an electioneering kind of gimmickry in presenting this bill in the hope that they could turn it into a good news story. They must feel that they're losing public support on substantive issues like health care and education and social support services if they have to resort to this.

I suppose one of the questions you ask is, is this bill going to be popular? If the government has presented it in the hope of getting a popular, positive response, then you have to ask, is it going to be popular? I suspect, again to my regret, that it will be a popular bill. There is a common view, which all of us who are politicians are only too well aware of, that the fewer politicians there are the better it is. Who will really miss a few more politicians? It's easy to appeal to this view. It's a lot easier to appeal to that common view than it is to challenge it, to challenge through our words and actions the cynicism people have about politicians, to be able to

say to people and to show people that politics is indeed an honourable profession, and that it is not only an honourable profession pursued by people who are committed to their calling, but that it is also clearly fundamentally essential to democratic government. It's easier to get the politically popular hit, and to my regret, that's what this government has chosen.

All right, it's popular, but the question then has to be asked, is it right? I will acknowledge that in a part of it this bill does have merit because the issue of redistribution had to be addressed. We all know that it is a reality that as the urban areas have grown, particularly the suburban area around Metropolitan Toronto, there are huge ridings, ridings with so many people that it is virtually impossible for an elected representative to truly be in contact with all of his or her constituents. We know that problem had to be addressed. We agree with the fact that it had to be addressed.

I suppose it would have been not even remotely possible that the government could have considered for even a fraction of a moment that one of the ways of addressing that problem of having ridings that were too large to be represented in terms of the number of people that had to be represented would have been to think of adding more politicians and more representatives. That would clearly not have been politically popular, even though it would not have been a very costly alternative. In my view, as unpopular politically as it might have seemed, it would have served the purpose of enhancing representation and enhancing the representativeness of this House rather than decreasing the representation.

I am concerned that the government's choice to deal with the issue of redistribution, which had to be dealt with, by reducing the numbers of representatives we have is really the wrong way. It's wrong because it does lead to reduced representation overall and it's wrong, I have to say as a northern representative, because it is particularly hard on the representation for rural and northern Ontario.

I know that other members have already spoken to this issue and I know too that people who are now members of the government have in the past been eloquent themselves on the issue of their concern to make sure that rural and northern Ontario had a voice in this place, that people like Mr Harris himself, Mr Eves and Mr Villeneuve expressed their passionate belief that the voices of rural and northern Ontario should not be reduced. It saddens me that in subscribing to this easy political route to solve the distribution problem they have abandoned those once passionately held beliefs.

The problem has been identified, has been talked about, and there are other colleagues who will continue to address this issue of why there is a problem particularly in northern Ontario in providing representation for what seems like a small number of people. We acknowledge the fact that our ridings are not densely populated. The problem we have is not one of too many people to represent effectively; it's a problem of the sheer geographic area. It's the physical problem. It's the problem of people not being able to be in direct contact with their representatives and their representatives not being able to

be out in the communities understanding at first hand what the concerns of the communities are.

What will become the new Kenora riding will be one third of the land mass of the province of Ontario. Thank goodness we are at the moment represented in Kenora by a member, Mr Miclash, who flies an airplane so that he can reach the boundaries of that riding on a regular basis. To think of that riding being enlarged to the point where it is a third of the land mass of the province; it is hard to imagine that even a representative who happens to be a pilot and has an airplane is ever going to adequately understand the concerns of all of the communities in that riding.

What will be the riding of Algoma, or Algoma-Manitoulin, is as large in its geographic size as the province of Nova Scotia. Imagine if you were to go to the province of Nova Scotia and say: "Don't worry, folks, you only need one representative. That's all you really need." That's essentially what we're saying to the people of Algoma and Algoma-Manitoulin: "You only need one representative, even though the area that representative has to serve is as large as the entire province of Nova Scotia."

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There is no question that the ultimate principle in deciding electoral boundaries is representation by population, but it's clear that this in its rigid application has some limitations. The federal boundaries commissions have always recognized that fact; in fact, it's constitutionally recognized that there are some limits to representation by population when it means that the representation of particular areas will be reduced to the point where they cannot have an effective voice. We know that there are minimum numbers of representatives, regardless of population, for the Northwest Territories, for Prince Edward Island. It seems to me that when you come to a province as large as Ontario and you come to the provincial assembly, there should be similar consideration given to large geographic areas that do not have large populations.

Northern Ontario, in this redistribution, will lose one third of its representatives. There is no question that in rural and northern Ontario, where we already have numerically few representatives compared to the whole assembly, the voices are going to be lessened and are less likely to be heard.

I don't think there needs to be a worry that having something a little less than representation by population in places like northern Ontario is ever going to create any danger of the voices of larger urban communities being overwhelmed. We would never be able to outvote urban areas, but I do believe that the voice of rural and northern Ontario needs to be heard. I don't think that kind of concern was taken into account in any way in putting forward this act.

There was an earlier discussion taking place about the role of provincial members in their representation. I believe our constituents need to be heard. I believe my constituents need to be heard from. We talk to them about health care and education and the state of their roads and whether they've got access to housing and whether they're getting their family support payments and

whether they're having difficulty getting their concerns with the Workers' Compensation Board recognized. Provincial representation is very hands-on. You're dealing with day-to-day issues of concern to our constituents. We may not be dealing in the larger milieu of international relationships, but we are dealing with whether there is enough affordable housing in a community that people can find a place to live.

It's important that we be able to hear the concerns that our constituents have and be able to take action to respond to them on an individual basis. We are not solely policymakers, we are not solely lawmakers; we are people who are there to help our constituents access the services that government must provide to them.

I know we have a government that believes a 1-800 number is a meaningful contact with constituents. I suppose if you believe that a 1-800 number can substitute even for a regional office that works directly with people, you're not terribly worried about reducing representation. I don't happen to believe that a 1-800 number works. It certainly doesn't work for constituents in the riding of Fort William; I don't think it works for constituents even in ridings in Metropolitan Toronto. I believe that in any place in this province people want to have direct contact with an elected representative, who can in turn speak for them to government.

The member for Mississauga South has spoken about the ongoing challenge of dealing with appropriate distribution of representation. I suppose the reason I think that we need to deal with redistribution, that we need to ensure there is effective representation, that we need to ensure members in the greater Toronto area are able to have direct contact with their constituents, so we need to divide those ridings so that they're not trying to deal with over 100,000 constituents is exactly the same reason that I want to make a case that there needs to be greater representation in rural and northern Ontario and that reducing their representation is the wrong way to go, because it reduces our ability to have direct contact, it reduces the ability of our constituents to come and speak with us and it reduces our ability to be out in communities understanding the concerns of those communities.

This bill is a somewhat different bill than most of the bills we have had to deal with in this House under this government, because most of what we deal with with this government is related to dollar savings, it's related to the bottom line of balancing the budget while you try to find \$5 billion for a tax cut. This bill's different.

There really are not significant savings in this bill, although I found it interesting that during the election campaign when the Conservatives were campaigning they were planning to reduce the number of provincial representatives by 30 and they were going to save \$1.1 million. They must have decided that they had to reinforce to the point of exaggeration the economic benefits of this bill, because they are now reducing the number of representatives by 27 and suddenly the saving has become \$11 million.

The fact is, whether exaggerated or not, the saving is not large in relationship to the overall provincial budget, and it is certainly, in my view, not worth the representation that will be lost as a result.

But perhaps for me — and I say this even as a northern member genuinely concerned about the loss of representation in the north — the worst part is what this bill does to reinforce the cynicism that we know is already present in the public mind about politicians and about public policy, political activity and government itself.

I have reason to speak on this because I have been concerned for some time and have spent a great deal of my recent years in politics trying to understand what we can do, as politicians, as political parties, and I would have hoped perhaps with an opportunity in government but now in a continued role in opposition, to reduce that cynicism. I want to do that because I am a politician and I am unapologetically a politician. I am here, as I believe my colleagues are, because I believe that politics and government make a difference in people's lives, a very direct difference. I believe that good government matters to people. I believe that whether we are acting in opposition or whether we are acting as members of the government party that we contribute, each in our way, to the process of government.

I am not here, and I don't think my colleagues are here, because it is the easiest thing to do. There is often a lot of personal sacrifice in carrying out our representative role. It's a sacrifice I think people make willingly and we take a lot of pleasure in our role, that we enjoy being the representatives of our community. I think one of the privileges of being a community representative is that we get invited into our community in ways that no other person has the privilege to do. But we are here primarily because we really believe that what we do matters. We want our contribution to make a positive difference in people's lives.

I truly deplore the kind of cynicism about politicians which this bill reinforces. I deplore the fact that it is presented by a government whose individual members — I believe this of the members of the government on the other side of the House, I believe that each of those individual members must surely believe that they are here as representatives of their people. Surely, as individuals the members of the government don't want to devalue the very work that they do or their purpose in being here, and yet that's what this bill does as a result of acting on a cynical campaign commitment.

Even more than that, and I don't want to be grandiose about this, but I really believe in democratic government. I really believe in the process of democracy. We go into schools and we talk to young people about why it's important for them to get involved, for them to be concerned, whether it is in understanding what government is all about or becoming involved as a voter, as an informed voter concerned about the impact of their particular vote, or whether it is directly involved in the political process. We want people to believe that their participation matters.

People who are cynical aren't going to participate. If you believe, as surely we all do, that the whole purpose of democratic government is government by the people, of the people, for the people, clearly democracy itself cannot survive unless the people participate. It must be government of the people, it must be a government that

people want to be involved with. If people are cynical they will walk away. They will not participate in political processes of whatever party. They will not even value the vote that they cast. When we see the numbers of people who actually come out and vote in elections, we know that we have a lot of cynical people who have walked away from the entire process.

1700

I think that every one of us who serves in this House as an elected representative wants every one of our electors to know with certainty that their vote is meaningful and that their choice of a representative to serve them is important. Unless they do, I truly fear that the whole foundation of democracy is threatened.

I come to my very regretful conclusion that this is a cynical bill, that it is a bill presented by a government that is far more interested in political hits than it is in any kind of participatory democracy or the principles of participatory democracy. I believe it is presented by a government that is not only more interested in the politics than it is in the democratic process, but by a government that sees only two approaches to government.

One is to abandon government altogether as being not worth it, and we see that on many fronts: the walking away from government services, the walking away from government support, the belief somehow that the fittest should survive and that's all right; the view of the extreme right that as little government as possible is in the interests of the people. That's one approach this government takes.

On the other hand, where they are required to provide service or where they are still involved in providing service and want to do it for less dollars, we have a government that is prepared to impose its will in a dictatorial way. We have a government that uses the word "consultation" a lot but which, we have seen, uses "consultation" as a word in a vocabulary and a word that can be used to answer questions in question period but which is totally absent from any of its actions.

We've seen it in a government that has walked away from any kind of consultation on school board amalgamations. We've seen it in a government that closed the regional offices of family support plans without any consultation with the people who were affected by that decision. We saw it last week in the decision of the minister responsible for culture and for sports to cut the grants for sports organizations without any consultation with sports groups. We've seen it in the proposed changes that will affect the disabled of this province, with no consultation with any representatives of the disabled. We have seen it in spades in a way that we have never seen it before: a dictatorial approach to government in the setting up of a health restructuring commission that can send non-elected representatives into communities to dictate to a community what they shall and shall not do in determining the health care needs of their constituents, of their citizens.

We have seen a government that I think would be just as happy to replace elected representatives with the whole process of what they like to consider direct democracy, a process of referenda, but in fact a government that would control the agenda by controlling those referendum

questions. I would be very surprised to ever see this government put a question on a referendum that said, "Do you support the closure of a hospital in your community?" I'd be very surprised if this government ever placed a referendum question that said, "Would you be prepared to give up your tax cut in order to have those dollars back in your local hospital?" I believe that a government that talks about dealing with complex issues of public policy through referenda is really a government that is saying: "We want to control the agenda. We want to control the questions so we can control the answers."

It is a fact that it is local representatives who are in the best position to hear their constituents and to hear their constituents' concerns. We hear our constituents. I don't think there's a member of this House, if you're going home to your riding tonight, as I am, if you're going to be in your constituency office tomorrow, who is not going to hear from constituents.

In my riding, I will hear, as I heard when I was home last, constituents who call me and say, "Please don't let them close my hospital." I'm going to hear from people like the parents of special education kids whom I was talking to last week, who are going to say, "Please tell them what it's like for my child to be a special needs child and to have no special education program, to be in a class of 41 other students with no special education supports." Those are the kinds of concerns that as an elected representative I'm going to hear in my constituency office tomorrow.

I'm going to hear the anguish of people. I'm going to hear from parents, parents who are trying to care for their children, who were wondering last month where their cheque was going to come from, since the government had set up a 1-800 number which was not terribly responsive to their concerns, and who got from the government the answer that the cheque was in the mail. We're going to hear from those parents in our constituency office tomorrow, who know that a 1-800 line is not the answer to making sure they get the child support payments that they need.

These are the kinds of concerns we're going to hear from constituents, and they're the kinds of concerns I don't believe this government wants to hear, which is one of the reasons why they're not terribly concerned about less representatives in this place.

We're going to travel the roads in our constituencies. In northern Ontario, when this bill is passed, we're going to be travelling a lot more roads in the attempt to hear from our constituents. In the course of travelling those roads, we're going to know first hand what happens when the maintenance of highway budgets has been reduced and our drivers are facing dangerous conditions. We're going to fight this government when its decisions have a negative impact on our constituents. I know, I believe, that members of the government, who have to fight a little bit more quietly, are going to fight equally hard to have the concerns of their individual constituents heard when the government makes its decisions.

I suggest it is no wonder that this government wants less representation. They don't want to hear the voices, they don't want to hear the concerns, so they will crack the whip. I would be very surprised if they were not able

to summon enough support from the government benches, in spite of what I know to be the individual concerns of elected representatives on the part of the government. In spite of the concerns they will have, I know the government whip will manage to get enough support to pass this bill, because it will be popular, it hits hot buttons, and that's one of the specialties of this government. It's going to be passed because it's going to distract attention from the destructive decisions this government is making that are not popular.

So this one's easy. It's popular. Let it be out there. Let's pull a flatbed truck away and remind people of how we are having fewer politicians and not talk too much about what that means in terms of their voices being heard. It serves this government's purpose to reduce representation. It serves this government's purpose to limit access of constituents in many parts of this province to their elected representative. It lets this government be better able to control the agenda and better able to ignore the impacts of the decisions it's making.

This bill is cynical, it is wrong and, in my view, it is not too grandiose to say it is an affront to democracy and is entirely democratic. I regret that this bill is before the House. I regret even more that it is so entirely consistent with the direction of this government.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Questions and comments? Further debate.

Mr Gilchrist: I just want to put on the record again that after I speak, and we were pleased to accommodate the leader of the official opposition, the rotation will go to the third party.

It's certainly my pleasure to rise today to say a few things in defence of and in favour of the Fewer Politicians Act. We've had some interesting commentary so far in this House, and I will couch my comments, hopefully, in somewhat less pedantic and pedagogical terms than my two colleagues who decided they'd find the biggest books in the library and read from them for their 90 minutes.

Also, unlike the member from the third party, I intend to stay on the topic, because there is to be no doubt that this bill reflects one of the most solemn commitments that we made, both as a party and as individuals, during the last election campaign, namely, the objective of reducing the size and the complexity and expense of government. Accordingly, I am pleased that the House leader has put on the order paper this legislation which now fulfils one of the last commitments in the Common Sense Revolution left to be brought into legislation. It proves once again that ours is a government that's being built on a foundation of integrity and respect for the views and aspirations of the people of this province rather than governing by reaction to the headlines in the papers the night before.

I don't wish to dwell on lofty rhetorical phrases or to couch my comments in purely philosophical terms, because the reality is that this bill serves up many practical benefits for the taxpayers in this province. I would think that every member in this House would recognize and embrace that thought. There can be no doubt that throughout the public there's a broad recognition of the benefit of reducing the size of government. In fact, it needs to be stated it was the public themselves who were the inspiration for the bill that we're debating here today.

I'm immensely proud that back in 1992, as the president of the PC Party, I and my executive members put together a policy development process that allowed us to develop subcommittees with relevant expertise in every aspect of provincial interest, whether it was health or education or legislative matters such as the issue before us here today. Over 1,000 Ontarians came forward as volunteers, at their own expense, to share their thoughts, to share their views, to tell us what goals and aspirations they had to shape the kind of Ontario they wanted for their children and their children's children. These weren't backroom types in smoke-filled rooms; these were 1,000 people who weren't paid-up Tories, by and large, just people who had asked to be part of the process.

1710

We coupled that with an intensive round of task force meetings across the province. The now Premier and his caucus colleagues went across this province from one end to the other. I was pleased to be part of the task force on northern development that resulted in what we call A Voice for the North. We met tens of thousands of other Ontarians in the course of that. Couple that with the normal correspondence and the feedback to various press releases and a case can be made in absolute terms: tens of thousands of Ontarians were consulted prior to the 1995 election.

It is their words that were distilled down into the Common Sense Revolution. That document, which was then circulated to two million households across this province, obviously became the foundation of the strong electoral success that our party experienced last year. When our leader undertook the consultations which ultimately formed the CSR, we'd had the direct input of people from across the province. That was a four-year process. This was not some slapdash thing. Unlike the official opposition whose red book was an obvious response and a watered-down version of the CSR, ours was a well-thought-out program that touched on all aspects of Ontario life.

One of the things that came through loud and clear in every meeting, in every one of those subcommittees, was that government had become far too vast and complex. It was a burden on the taxpayer, not a benefit. It had become self-serving. It had lost touch with its original goals and objectives. It had become inefficient in many ways, and as the pyramids grew in every ministry, it became increasingly difficult for government policies, even the policies we disagreed with from our predecessors, to actually be translated down into direct action in the hands of the bureaucracy. Despite the fact that we had seen our province achieve the dubious distinction of being the most highly taxed jurisdiction in all of North America, there can be little argument that when it came to service delivery, we could not make a similarly boastful claim.

Despite the fact that over the years there had been an increase in the number of MPPs, there is no evidence on the record at all on the issue of accountability or in terms of access for the public or in terms of a demonstrable need based on workload that those increased numbers were justified. In addition, years of neglect, years of inequitable growth in the different regions of this prov-

ince, and to some extent an unwillingness to tackle the fundamental democratic principle of representation by population, all of these things had left Ontario with a patchwork of ridings which saw some members in this chamber elected by five times the number of voters as certain others of their colleagues.

I come from the old school that says that the vote of any person in the province of Ontario should, as closely as possible, carry equal weight with the vote of any other person. When the leader of the third party has the audacity to stand in this House, knowing he was elected by only 4,000 people when other members received over eight times that many votes in ridings five times the size of his, I think we need no more tangible evidence of why this system needs reform and why self-serving politicians should not be the ones to stand in the way of taxpayers' demand for efficient, effective, accountable and responsible government. I'm sure even the member who is the leader of the third party is not really saying that his constituents should have five times the electoral power of, say, the voters in Markham. And I'm sure he's not suggesting that he does five times the amount of work as the member from Markham. So I think it is proof positive that we have tremendous inequities which have to be addressed.

The Common Sense Revolution, which I mentioned earlier, was a landmark document indeed, perhaps the most tangible expression of ethics, integrity and accountability from a political party seen in many a year. In that document, we committed that we would make sure that the belt-tightening started here at Queen's Park. It began with the trimming of the operational budgets of every member in this chamber — that was put in place last year — and reduced the budgets for every member by 27%. It continued with the reform of the pay for MPPs, which saw some MPPs have their salaries reduced by as much as 12%. It also saw the elimination of the gold-plated pension plan. This bill delivers on our third commitment, to actually reduce the number of MPPs themselves to match the number of federal MPs elected in Ontario.

The member for Sault Ste Marie suggested in his comments just a few minutes ago that this bill is an attack on the Legislature. I would counter with the obviously — from his perspective — radical suggestion that to not follow through on our election promises would be an attack on democracy and an insult to those two million households that read the Common Sense Revolution and cast their votes accordingly.

While there's no doubt that there is a vastly different range of issues that come before provincial Parliament, and to some extent there might even be an argument that the complexity of those issues requires marginally greater time by the members of the provincial Parliament, I for one am not prepared to go back to my riding of Scarborough East and admit that I or any one of my colleagues will take a back seat to MPs when it comes to our ability and our willingness to handle the responsibilities of ridings which would average about 100,000 residents.

There is even a precedent for what we are proposing to do here today. In 1933, Premier Henry, reflecting the

dire economic circumstances in which the government of the day found itself, reduced the number of MPPs from 112 down to 90. I think it's most apt that in the context of having inherited a \$100-billion debt load, the argument can be made that despite boundless optimism, despite the enthusiasm of our entrepreneurs and our workers, despite the energy, the industry and the assets of this province, past government mismanagement and fiscal irresponsibility leave us no choice but to examine every possible avenue of new operational efficiencies and ways of making the taxpayers' dollars go farthest.

Yesterday, the member for Renfrew North noted that when the Premier reduced the number of MPPs back in 1933, he added a second cost-cutting measure, namely, a reduction in the executive branch. I'm surprised. I'm genuinely surprised that the honourable member would raise such a point in his criticism when he knows full well that our government last year swore in the smallest cabinet in 30 years and has reduced the size of the staff complement in the Premier's office to a level well below that of our predecessors.

Let me spend a moment on the financial aspects of this bill, because they are significant, to say the least. In the minimum, the reduction of 27 MPPs and their attendant office expenses will save \$11 million for the taxpayers of this province. But the savings don't end there. We have already begun discussions with the federal government with a view to cooperating on certain technical aspects of the operation of elections borne by the provincial and the federal election commissions. Areas of possible cooperation include but are not limited to enumeration, poll design, mapping and perhaps ultimately the actual merger of the electoral commissions into one commission at some point in the future.

While many Ontarians would support such a move today, this bill speaks only to the legislative savings and those technical responsibilities that can accomplish a reduction in concert with our federal colleagues. We can leave the debate for an outright merger to another day. But when one recognizes that the cost of running a provincial election is well over \$36 million and that many of those expenses are then duplicated by the federal government and, quite frankly, by the municipal government every three years, there is no doubt that a case can be made that there will be dramatic savings accruing to taxpayers.

1720

Responsible taxpayers from across the province have told us, have demanded from us that we find ways to save on frivolous duplication, find ways to end the pyramid-building, find ways to end the justification of all the empires that have been built up in the civil service, arm's-length agencies and the like, and instead to utilize modern technology that's available to us today to come up with new and innovative means of conducting the electoral process while still respecting issues of privacy and respecting the geographical realities of this province as well.

There's one other point that really must be stressed as an inevitable consequence of this bill and is one of the most compelling justifications for its passage, and that is to show that our government is prepared to lead by

example, not just within the context of our dealings with the Ontario civil service, but also in terms of our relations with the subsidiary municipal governments across this province.

When you recognize that Metro Toronto alone has 104 school trustees, a number greater than all the MPs elected to govern this province and a number greater than what we're proposing to be the composition of this Legislature, I don't think there's any doubt — I think it's abundantly clear to everyone in Toronto and everywhere else in this province, to any reasonable taxpayer — that the excesses and the unfettered growth of the bureaucracy, both provincially and municipally, must be reined in.

It was interesting to note that all three of the Toronto papers came out in support of this bill. I guess we have to be somewhat suspicious any time the Toronto Star backs us, but it was interesting to note that the same day the Toronto Star came out with an unqualified endorsement for this bill, it had a second editorial in it that commented that there were also far too many school trustees and that the time had come to re-examine that entire level of government. Perhaps for the first time in a long time, I absolutely agree with the Toronto Star.

You can rest assured that we've heard the clarion call of that newspaper and of other newspapers across the province and of the citizens to whom we are the most responsible, the taxpayers of Ontario. We are going to end the duplication. We are going to rein in the bureaucracy. We will demonstrate through our actions — through our self-imposed belt-tightening, through our willingness to take on a greater workload personally — that we will expect no less of any and all municipal governments across Ontario.

Once again, the beneficiary will be the hard-pressed and overtaxed citizens of this province. They will come to realize that their interests have not been served by these bureaucracies as they've become bloated and expanded exponentially over the years. Rather, only the interests of certain politicians have been furthered by such a failing.

Interjection.

Mr Gilchrist: Indeed, for the future.

Just to wrap up, the key points of this bill to be considered by all Ontarians are the following: After years of neglect, after years of the erosion of the principle of representation by population, perhaps the most fundamental tenet of democracy, this government has proved it is prepared to make the tough political moves, take the tough decisions and recognize there is a need to right that wrong.

We have continued to recognize the unique situation in northern Ontario, and while all of us empathize with the different demands of the members elected in the far north in particular, there is no doubt that there are very different demands on the members in urban ridings. It has not been stated by anyone opposite that the demands in their riding include evening meetings. Obviously, they don't fly back to Algoma or Kenora or Sault Ste Marie Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night or even for work on Thursday night. Most Metro and other urban members near Metro have demands those nights. There

are 14- and 15-hour days six days a week, maybe seven days a week.

Again, I am very sympathetic to members, not just in the north but in rural Ontario, who have to meet their constituents on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, as needs may be. But to suggest that their workload is more difficult, to suggest that they have greater demands on their time, I think is seriously misleading and does not recognize the different reality and the different demands on members such as my colleagues from Hamilton and other ridings around Toronto, and downtown Toronto in particular, and even Mississauga, not to leave anybody out.

There is no doubt that the demands in terms of welfare and housing issues are far greater in the urban centres than they are in rural Ontario. When you recognize that there are two more seats in northern Ontario than would be the case in a distribution that was truly based on representation by population across Ontario, I think you can make a very sound case that that 18% differential should recognize the different travel time in those ridings.

I would also suggest, as is the case, that most members in the north have embraced 1-800 numbers as a means of access to their office. It really doesn't follow that the member has to go out to all the district communities in their riding as long as there's an ability for the people with concerns to reach them in their office.

We've recognized the needs in northern Ontario, or the federal government did, by creating two extra ridings and we've continued to endorse that principle by agreeing to share the federal boundaries, which is, of course, the third point. One of the members opposite in his address suggested there was gerrymandering, suggested there was some kind of intrigue and some kind of backroom finagling on the part of our government in setting the boundaries. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The fact of the matter is that it was the federal government which, with a 17-person, non-partisan committee, went across the country, did the number-crunching, listened to submissions from people all across Ontario, and as a result of their considered deliberations came out with the conclusion that Ontario is best served based on the boundaries they have laid out in this document here. You will remember too it was in May 1994 that we made the commitment in the Common Sense Revolution to reflect the federal boundaries if, as and when we were elected. So no one could suggest we had any way of forecasting what the outcome would be in terms of the changed mix in the composition between the three parties based on the adoption of those boundaries.

We're clearly pleased to see that the federal government has in many respects adopted boundaries that are more or less consistent with existing provincial ridings and that the extent of dislocation is minimal, but that is purely and simply based on coincidence and/or the fact that it was their considered opinion based on submissions by people, and the members opposite were welcome to have made submissions themselves to the boundaries commission.

I'd go one step further to suggest that, knowing we were democratically elected on a platform that included this plank to reduce from 130 members to 103, I am at a loss to understand why any member opposite would not,

in the seven months between the election and the date that the federal government passed their enabling legislation, have taken the time and trouble to send off a letter or pick up the phone and call the commission and make their submissions, and if they did, clearly again a non-partisan commission chose to disagree with those submissions and they have crafted the boundaries according to common sense.

We laid this out two and a half years ago. We made it very clear that the issue of the boundaries themselves was out of our hands. We were prepared to trust a non-partisan group to come up with the best solution on how we make this adaptation, on how we find this cost saving, and I think they've done a wonderful job.

The fourth point: The plan will save money, tens of millions of tax dollars each term of the government after the next election, and depending on the degree of cooperation we get from our federal colleagues, it is conceivable we could be talking an amount up to \$80 million each term of a government.

The fifth point: It shows we're leading by example. It really is, "Do as I do," when we talk to our municipal partners. When we talk to the municipal governments, when we talk to the school boards, we can show them we are asking nothing of them that we haven't already asked of ourselves.

Perhaps the most important reason for bringing forward this bill is to demonstrate again, as if further demonstrations were necessary, that ours is a government that is accountable, it is accessible, and we are doing what we said we would do: We are keeping the promises of the Common Sense Revolution.

1730

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): That's certainly a stark contrast from earlier today when member after member on the government side got up and lambasted Ottawa for its federal approach to the way it treats the provincial government, saying that it was out of touch and it was going contrary to everything the province was doing. Now this afternoon, when it suits them, they're saying, "Isn't this great what Ottawa did," that we should work closely with Ottawa. He was talking about a merger of a number of different functions with Ottawa when earlier today they said Ottawa is the worst thing that ever happened and the government there has no understanding of the realities of Ontario.

I think what you have to look at, that this is really, as the member has said, about demonstration. It's not about doing the right thing for the future of this province in terms of how this province works as a democratic society.

The member talks about saving money. I just wonder how many millions of dollars they're going to spend on their referendum agenda when they're going to place referendums on the ballots all across this province. I know Mr Bailie, the electoral officer, said this was ridiculous, it was going to cost \$33 million to put an item on the ballot. If they're really concerned about saving money, I would say that this is not going to do it for them. I think it might cost them more money in not looking at the cost of referendums, for instance.

I'd also say the member seems to be in love with this 1-800 approach to government. Sometimes people like to talk face to face with their MPP. They don't like to be playing telephone tag on voice mail with this 1-800 solution. Let's get down to what this is all about. This is about dealing with people on a one-to-one basis. Sure, it's messy, it's expensive sometimes, but let's remember what it's all about. It's about democracy.

Mr Silipo: I'm glad to have a brief chance to respond to the comments made by the member for Scarborough East. I have to say that I listened with some interest because this is an issue that I have a lot of interest in, as I know a number of members in this assembly do. There was one comment at the beginning of his statement that I have to say I agree with, and that was when he said that the Liberal red book was simply a watered-down version of the CSR. I have to say that after that point that he made, I've got to disagree with virtually everything else that's at the basis of what he has said, with potentially the only other point that on this one at least they can stand up and say that they are doing what they promised they would do, although I think it begs the question as to how much attention people actually paid to this particular promise in the gamut of all of the others, but I think it's clear that what we're seeing here, at least in terms of what the bill does, is what was promised.

But I think that the problem that's behind there and that I had trouble, as I say, in following the rationale that the member opposite put forward, is that he seems to have come to the conclusion that what we have in front of us is going to, among other things, improve the problem of representation by population, which he has said is a principle that's been eroded. Because if he looks, and if anybody looks, at the present system, which is going to continue under this new system with albeit fewer MPPs, it's going to do nothing to improve the representation-by-population concept, because you look now across the province and you will see that in fact a vote does not carry the same weight, it will not carry the same weight under this new system, but what will be worse is that many areas like northern Ontario and rural Ontario will be worse off than they are today.

Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole): I would like to comment on the speech of the member for Scarborough East and say that I see you have a problem. Cheer up. Lighten up over there.

We feel that representative democracy and participatory democracy is seriously threatened by this bill and that cynicism is significantly enhanced by it. The only comment where I would differ from my colleague from Dovercourt is that the only thing I agreed with that the member for Scarborough East had to say was the belief that representation by population is important and it should form the basis of representative democracy when determining what boundaries are. However, the simplistic approach he has taken in defence of this bill, which I believe is indefensible, that it is better for this province to have one representative for one third of the land mass, that there is somehow going to be an improvement because you are saying to communities — not in urban areas. I'm not arguing the urban argument and in fact, as the member for Oriole, my riding is not seriously

impacted and this is not about loss of seats. This is about loss of voice and representation and the ability of people to be heard in this place and the frustration they will feel and the alienation they will feel when they find that it is a long-distance phone call to their member's constituency office. This is a vast and huge province.

When I listen to the member, I hear his words diminish the role of members of this Legislature and I believe that is sad commentary on the member's performance.

Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South): Mr Speaker, I want to take this brief opportunity to congratulate you in your august appointment.

I want to congratulate the member for Scarborough East for his presentation of the government's position. I would like to share with this House my view that this bill is actually the antithesis of cynicism. To me, cynicism is if you expect other people to make changes in their lives, large changes in how they are governing themselves, what resources are available to them, and you are not willing or able to make those changes yourself.

I think what my friend the member for Scarborough East said in his remarks was that we have to lead by example. I believe it was the fifth point he made, but I would make it my first point. In order to accomplish the goals that were set out for us by the electorate, we have to lead by example. We have to be able to say we can do better with less. Just as our federal brethren are able to represent their ridings to the best of their ability, so we too can represent constituencies of that size and population. Quite frankly, in my particular case I'll be going from a riding of 120,000 persons currently to something less than that. So to say this automatically means that you will be representing more people less well is not in fact the case.

In conclusion, the way out of the cynicism that the electorate produces on politicians is to lead by the example we are setting for ourselves to say that we can do better with less and then to say to those other politicians in other jurisdictions, "If we can do it, so can you, and to the betterment of the population at large."

Mr Gilchrist: Just a couple of closing comments in response. Thanks to my colleagues from Oakwood, Dovercourt, Oriole and Brampton South for their comments.

I'd like to say to the member for Oakwood that if he was listening carefully, I was not bashing Ottawa.

Mr Colle: No, you were praising them.

Mr Gilchrist: No. It was a non-partisan commission, so unless you're giving us insider information that in fact these were partisan appointments —

Mr Colle: No, I didn't say that.

Mr Gilchrist: That's good, because then I will continue to be confident that when non-partisan people set about to do a task as important as this, they will come to the best conclusion possible. Nor did Mr Bailie say that referenda were ridiculous. He may have speculated on the cost of referenda, but he did not say they were ridiculous, and I think that's another important aspect of how we will be accountable to the electorate and be accessible to them.

A point was made about whether or not this was a well-known plank in our platform. I can tell the members

opposite I personally indicated how significant I thought this was and my personal support at every single all-candidates meeting and at many doors across the riding. There's no doubt in my mind that the people of Scarborough East knew that this was part of our program; it was something I was personally and totally committed to, and I say with the greatest of respect that the people of Ontario did read that book and they did know what they were doing when they voted for it, and to suggest otherwise is to minimize your own votes because obviously the sword cuts both ways.

Finally, the ratio right now in some ridings is 5 to 1. To the member who suggested that this would not help restore the balance to rep by pop, I'm afraid the math just doesn't bear them out. The worst ratio now — the smallest riding will have 76,000 people, the largest 108,000 — is a difference of 1 to 1.4, a far cry from a 5 to 1 ratio that is the unfortunate legacy we inherited with the last election.

1740

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Silipo: I'm glad to have the chance to speak to this. I see by the clock that I won't finish my comments today, but in the time that remains I want to put a few things on the record.

First of all, I want to be clear that I'm going to oppose this bill. I'm going to vote against this bill but I don't want it to be understood for a second that I am standing here defending the status quo. I believe, and I hope to show you during my comments, that I would make some very drastic changes to the way this place is run, to the way MPPs are elected, to the way this place functions. I believe that if we really are serious about increasing democracy and the right of people across the province to have a greater say in who their representatives are and what they do once they are elected, the answers lie far beyond whatever the magical number is of MPPs who should be elected to this Legislature.

I say this as somebody who will be affected by the change in boundaries, if it comes about, as it likely will. I see that my colleague the member for Oakwood is here in the chamber today. It may very well be, some have speculated, that we will end up running against each other in the new riding of Davenport, or I may end up running against the present member for Parkdale. That may be, and each of us is going to have to deal with that fallout, whatever that is. In some cases we know — in many cases, in fact — members of the Conservative caucus are going to be vying for the same nomination, so they'll have to deal with those issues.

I want to say that this issue to me is not about us. It's not about how it affects me as the present member for Dovercourt; it's not about how it affects you as the present member for Etobicoke West, Mr Speaker, or any other member. This is a far greater issue than the impact on any individual member of the Legislature presently. The problem I have with this piece of legislation is that unfortunately, like many other measures that we've seen this government adopt, it takes a very simplistic approach, a very simplistic answer to an issue that I think is much more fundamental.

I'm glad, Mr Speaker, that you're sitting in the chair for this particular debate. It wasn't that long ago, before you were elected to the position of Speaker, that you and I were sitting together in a committee dealing with another piece related to this: the question of referenda. I agreed with virtually everything I heard you say on a particular afternoon when you were talking about the problems that exist in the present system of government, in this representation by population system that we have, in which individual members of this assembly have less and less power, it seems, with each government that gets elected. What we have instead is a greater and greater concentration of powers in the Office of the Premier.

That should be part of this discussion in a much more fundamental way than it obviously is so far and certainly in a much more fundamental way than it is in this bill. Were we serious and were this government serious about bringing about greater democracy, were this government really serious about giving people greater say and greater power over their elected representatives and over their Legislative Assembly, I think we would see in front of us a number of other changes, not just this preoccupation with a mathematical reduction in the number of seats with, yes, some cost savings that will come as a result of that. I don't want to play number games with people, but as if that were going to resolve and that would resolve the problems that we have, which I believe are fundamental.

Yes, there is growing cynicism. I think any of us, whether we've just been recently elected or have been in public life for some time, who has not noticed that growing cynicism is really out of touch with the people that he or she tries to represent. But that growing cynicism, I would argue, has got a lot more to do with that sense of helplessness, that sense of lack of power that people have out there, that sense they have that at the end of the day it doesn't make any difference who they elect, that nothing really changes. That's what's at the basis of that cynicism.

When people see services being eroded without any real explanation, with just a sense that, well, maybe this has to be done, that's when that cynicism grows. When politicians aren't able to have rational and useful discussions any more, when people aren't able to influence in an ongoing way the decisions their politicians make, that's when the cynicism grows. That's when people feel they no longer have any ability to control what the people they elect do, whether it's at the federal, the provincial or local level. That's when that cynicism grows. That's when people say it doesn't matter, that it doesn't matter if there's 130 or 103 or three, it's one and the same.

Having said that, I want to come back to some of the nuts and bolts in here, before coming back to this broader issue, to which I think there are some answers. One of the things, coming back to the premises upon which this bill is based, that I find really flabbergasting is to note the complete abandonment of responsibility by this government and the request to this Legislature to completely abandon any responsibility from now into the future, forever and ever, with respect to the establishment of boundaries. As you know, the nuts and bolts of this bill are all contained in four short lines, four and a half

short lines, which just say, "For the purpose of representation in the Legislative Assembly, Ontario is divided into electoral districts whose number, names" — even the names — "and boundaries are identical to those of its federal electoral districts." And that's it. It's just saying that whatever the federal process decides is good enough for us.

Of course, others have already pointed out that the federal process first of all has to take into account a whole set of other variables.

Mr Colle: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think we have a quorum.

The Speaker: Do we have a quorum?

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Speaker: The member for Dovercourt.

Mr Silipo: I actually have to say I wonder what will happen to the quorum number once the new number is settled. That's not dealt with in this bill, is it? I haven't found it.

I was making the point that one of the problems I have with just the practicalities of this bill, before going back to some of the broader issues that I think are fundamental here, is that there is this abrogation of responsibility from now until the end of time to whatever the federal process is going to be. Of course, the criteria that are used at the federal level are very different. I know people talked earlier about, are the federal members more important or less important in terms of how people perceive them and the local needs? I don't want to get into an argument about whether our federal members work harder or not than we do, or whether even in the Ontario context people in Metropolitan Toronto work less or harder than people who represent northern ridings. I think in our own ways we all do the best that we can and work as hard as we can to represent our respective citizens.

1750

But I don't think that is the point. The point is that when the federal process looks at establishing the ridings, they have to take into account very different criteria from what are being suggested here. That sense of regionalism I think the member for Renfrew North spoke about in a particular way yesterday is something that is lost if you don't have a distinct process for the province of Ontario, to take into account the fact that there are differences between representing a riding like the one I happen to represent in west Toronto and a riding like my colleague the member for Algoma, for example, represents in northern Ontario.

My friend Mr Wildman continues to remind me of the fact that the distance from one end of his riding to the other is about the same distance as it is from Toronto to Sault Ste Marie. That's the present riding, which is going to grow tremendously under the changes envisaged in this bill. How could any of us who happen to represent areas in urban Ontario not want to pause and take a look at what this does for rural Ontario, for northern Ontario?

I'm not going to belabour the point, but it has certainly been put on the record that the present Minister of

Agriculture, among others, made this point very clearly when he presented a private member's resolution a few years ago — which was adopted, I believe, with support from all three parties in the House — which said, "Look, there ought to be different approaches taken to how we establish the ridings across the province." So there is a recognition that ridings in rural Ontario, whether they be the north or other parts of rural Ontario, have to be looked at in a different way than those ridings that have a mix of urban and rural populations and those ridings that are strictly urban in their makeup.

I think within the numbers, we have to understand that those are issues that need to be dealt with and they can't be dealt with adequately by simply adopting the federal boundaries.

To look again at this question of the numbers, in some ways you could make the argument that if all you do is play around with numbers, it doesn't really matter, because whether you have 130 or whether you have 103, if you don't make any changes to the way this place functions and if you don't make any changes particularly to the way we get elected in the first place, then I think the rest of the discussion, while important, to me is not the key issue.

Why do I say that? The member for Scarborough East earlier on was talking about the concept of rep by pop having been eroded. I think if he looks at it in the context of the numbers, probably he has a bit of an argument he can make. But the point I was trying to make — and I couldn't make it, obviously, in the minute and a half in responding — was that if you look at the present system and you look at what's going to happen under the 103, yeah, that may get a little bit better, but you're not fixing the problem, because the problem stems from the way we are now elected. If you continue to perpetuate this notion of the single-member constituencies that we have now — and I understand the history and I understand the significant merits that system has — the reality is that what that results in is some great inequities in another way.

If you look at the results of the last election and you see that in terms of the votes the current governing party received, they resulted in 82 seats, as we know. But if you break that down across the province in terms of votes — and I'm not going to talk about percentage of votes here; I'm talking about the votes received per seat — they managed to get elected to this Legislature one member for roughly every 22,000 votes they received. Compare that to how that vote impacted on the New Democratic Party caucus. For us to get a member elected we needed to get 50,000 votes. Why is that? That's because of the system we have in place which says, really, that in each constituency the only votes that count are the votes of the winning candidate, and that the

votes of anybody else, no matter how significant, even if they are, as they are in most cases, a majority of the votes that are cast, all of a sudden don't matter any more.

I say to the member for Scarborough East that if he's really interested in increasing this concept of representation by population, it seems to me we've got to look at that. I know people across the world have looked at different systems. I certainly have stood here in my place on other occasions and talked about the concept of proportional representation as being something that I believe is more democratic. I know that there are issues that would have to be worked out with respect to that, but I believe that's one of the issues we should be looking at.

I believe that if we are serious about greater democracy in this Legislative Assembly, we need to take a look at the fundamentals of how we get elected in the first place. One of the changes we should bring about is exactly to that system of how we get elected, a system that allows in election after election, certainly when you look at the last 25 years, that there has never been a party, whether it's been the current governing party of the Conservatives or the Liberals or the NDP, that has ever won a majority of the popular vote. That has never happened in the last 25 years. In fact, I think you've got to go back to some time during the 1930s to find an instance, an election where a government actually has won a majority of the popular vote and consequently had a majority in the Legislative Assembly.

The pattern is that a party that wins is ranged anywhere from about 38%, as was the case with the former government, that I was a member of, to about the mid-40s, but anywhere in that range is usually sufficient for a party to win a majority of seats in the Legislature. But what happens is that on a proportionate basis this denies a voice to all those other people, to that majority of voters who did not vote for the government of the day.

I do not say this against the Conservative government of today because obviously, as I've already indicated and the record indicates very clearly, that is something which now all three parties that have representation in this Legislature have been a party to, a witness of and have benefited from. But to me it doesn't make it any more right, the fact that each of us has now gone through that. It says to me that because we've gone through that experience, we ought to now be able to look at this issue in a broader way than just this simple preoccupation with the magic number of MPPs in this Legislature.

I have a little bit more to say, but this may be an appropriate point, given the time on the clock, to stop and resume when we next pick up on this debate.

The Speaker: It now being nearly 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned till Tuesday at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1759.

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
105	4407	2	4	was a \$50-million budget line between the two ministries
105	4407	2	21	\$50 million a year down to \$83,000. What does that

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD
 Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell
 Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
 Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries
 Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Comwall	Cleary, John C. (L)		Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London South / -Sud	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Markham	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Middlesex	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Baird, John R. (PC)
Eglinton	Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Nepean	Maves, Bart (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara Falls	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Niagara South / -Sud	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nickel Belt	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Nipissing	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)		Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Speaker / Président		Colle, Mike (L)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition		Caplan, Elinor (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)		Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)		Patten, Richard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		Grandmaitre, Bernard (L)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)		McGuinty, Dalton (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Cooke, David S. (ND)
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Administration of justice / Administration de la justice

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Ed Doyle, Garry J. Guzzo, Tim Hudak,
Ron Johnson, Frank Klees, Gary L. Leadston,
Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker, David Ramsay,
David Tilson, Bud Wildman
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Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Alvin Curling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Joseph Cordiano
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Jim Brown,
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Tony Clement,
Joseph Cordiano, Alvin Curling, Morley Kells,
Peter Kormos, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,
Frank Sheehan, Wayne Wettlaufer
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**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

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Ted Chudleigh, Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak,
Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin, Gerry Martiniuk,
Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot, Rob Sampson,
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Len Wood, Terence H. Young
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Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,
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Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith
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Social development / Affaires sociales

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Gerard Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Julia Munro,
Dan Newman, Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit,
Peter L. Preston, Bruce Smith
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

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